TIRU MURUGAN

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Introduction

This Institute, under its special programme of encouraging the foreign Tamil scholars and utilizing their services toward the further enrichment of Tamil language and literature, invites Tamil scholars from various foreign countries periodically and requests them to give lectures on various facets of Tamil studies for a period spreading over three months. A beginning was made in 1980 with Dr. Velu Pillai from Sri Lanka giving lectures on "Epigraphical Evidences for Tamil Studies". This year we had Dr. Kamil Zvelebil of Holland, a scholar and a great lover of Tamil, who has been rendering commendable service in popularizing the Tamil literary tradition among the Westerners, and who has to his credit a work on the history of Tamil literature and the well-known *The Smile of Muruga.* He gave lectures on Tiru Murugan, the native God of the Tamils, which have now been brought out in print by this Institute.

Dr. Zvelebil, in this searching study, examine the various aspects of the worship of Tiru Murugan in their historical and sociological perspectives bringing in valuable evidences from different sources. In the chapter "The Dravidian Component of Modern Hinduism" he establishes the existence of two cultures in this country—Indo-Dravidian and Indo-Aryan—unique and distinct in their root and branch. He goes on to show that the Dravidian language and culture is the infrastructure on which is built the various institutions of Hinduism. Notwithstanding, the Dravidic features as manifest in their myths and beliefs are unique and elemental. The pre-puranic, pre-Aryan South Indian 'religion' is conspicuous by the absence of the multifarious, camplex myths that came into being with the advent of Aryan culture. The nucleus of Tamil myths, as enunciated by this author, can be seen in (i) Murugan's war against Cūr (ii) the myth of

Murugan's courtship of and marriage with Vaḷḷi and (iii) the Saga of Kaṇṇaki Pattiṉi.

Dr. Zvelebil discusses, briefly, the distinctly Dravidian origin of Murugan's struggle against the personified fear called Cūr and the etymology of Cūr which are unknown to the Sanskrit tradition. Then there is his elucidation of the myth of human soul passionately yearning for God, as represented in the courtship and the marriage of Vaḷḷi, the indigenous, local Dravidian wife to Murugan. His treatment of the Pattiṉi myth is a well-informed exposition of the exalted Tamil concept of wifely fidelity.

The Caṅkam classics Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai and Paripāṭal speak broadly about the hill-God Murugan. Here we see the mingling of the two traditions namely the north Indian Sanskrit tradition and the south Indian Dravidic tradition. The author concludes that these two texts still preserve the image of a dual deity—a Brahminic—Sanskritic Skanda, Subrahmaniya, and a tribal vēlan—Murugan. He emphasizes the fact that the original Tamil Murugan was the son of Koṟṟavai the mother-goddess of war and victory. Later on, in the author's view, the Tamil myth-makers have substituted Śiva as the father of the composite Skanda-Murugan in the South.

In the second talk on "The Dravidian Notion of the Sacred" he explains the power of the Sacred in its positive and negative manifestations. Aṇaṅku, the sacred force inherent in certain places, objects and beings is both beneficial and destructive. It seems to be a fear-breeding divine agent dwelling in different natural environments with one pervading common characteristic: it is elemental, lofty and awe-inspiring. As the early Tamils conceived of it, it was a force negative in influence, immanent in certain objects and places. This notion of Aṇaṅku is a unique heritage in Hinduism of the ancient, non-vedic culture. And the symbolism of 'being-there' is a closely related phonemenon, and another non-vedic Dravidian heritage. It is important to note that it was at the end of the so-called Caṅkam age

that the notion of immanence of the sacred in the sacred places asserted itself all over South India and temples began to assume importances.

"The Magnificient Myth of Murugan and Cūr" deals with a comparative study of the Tamil tradition and its Sanskrit counterpart in this particular realm. Here Dr. Zvelebil shows the varying and various aspects of Cūr in the Aryan and Tamil traditions. The conception of Cūr too is found to have its origin in Tamil literature of the Caṅkam period. And it is this personalized male Cūr that becomes the main enemy of Murugan. Here the author establishes the myth of Murugan's victory over Cūr through the early literary sources in Tamiḷ. Cūr is a great symbol of chaos and disorder, dangerous wild, and inimical in nature. The war between Murugan and Cūr is symbolic of the struggle between the untamed, threatening forces of nature and the forces of culture. In the process of this struggle, Cūr is not totally annihilated but transformed into peacock and rooster both of which serve the god, one as his vehicle and another as his banner. The author stresses the point that the myth of Murugan and Cūr is purely Dravidian in nature and content.

Murugan's courtship with Vaḷḷi is of heightened significance in the mythological history of Tamil. In the Sanskrit tradition, Skanda is either an eternal brahmacārin or the husband of a rather colourless deity, Dēvasēna, the army of the gods. Murugan's marriage with Vaḷḷi is of the nature of the clandestine pre-marital union of lovers i.e. kaḷavu. The events and episodes leading to the union of Murugan with Vaḷḷi which find their picturesque portrayals in all the Tamil-poems about Murugan are based on the Akam conventions. However, Dēvasēna's marriage with Murugan is solomonized in the conventional manner. The conflict between Dēvasēna and Vaḷḷi is reflective of the conflict between the native pre Aryan tradition and the imported Sanskrit tradition. In conclusion, the fact that Murugan's marriage with Vaḷḷi fits in neatly with the Pan-South Indian pattern of the double marriage of a God is emphatically brought out.

In his comparative study of Kantapuranam and Skanda-purāna, Dr. Zvelebil brings in for analysis two different versions. That the story of Murugan as described in Kanda-puranam of Kacciyappa Civācāriyār is purely autochthonous, belonging to the indigenous Tamil tradition is stressed here. The problems of the authorship of Kandapuranam and the dating of Kacciyappa and his work have found their treatment here. Then he speakes of the relationship between the Tamil work and the Sanskrit versions of the story. The author concludes that Tamil Kantapuranam is earlier than the Sanskrit version. Even in Sanskrit there are two versions—a Northern and a Southern. The Tamil version of Kacciyappa is much more organic and elaborate containing events and episodes of a more comprehensive nature than its Sanskrit counterpart, and again, in terms of artistic strength and elegance, the Tamil version is incomparably superior to the Sanskrit version. More specifically, the typical Tamil conventions, customs and beliefs are found missing in the Sanskrit version.

The consummation of the author's work can be seen in is treatment of how Vaḷḷi becomes a mother-goddess i.e. Sakti in the hands of Arunagiri Nātar.

On the whole, Dr. Zvelebil's is an attempt at tracing the impact of Tamil tradition on the worship of Tiru Murugan and his fellow deities. The penetrating insights of the author are refreshingly original and are based on his painstaking historical and archetypal approaches. This work will be of immense interest not only to the students of myth and religion but to the researches into the evolution of the relations between the Northern and Southern traditions and to the general public as well.

S. V. Subramanian

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THE DRAVIDIAN COMPONENT OF MODERN HINDUISM

I shall begin my essay with two quotations, one by Louis Dumont, another by Stephen A. Tyler. Elegantly, Dumont writes : "Je crois bien que c'est dans le Deccan que bat le coeur culturel de l'Inde." And an American anthropologist, S.A. Tyler, puts it more bluntly: "*All* of Indian civilization is built on an underlying base of ***Dravidian*** language and culture."

If it is indeed so, then it should be so in Hinduism, too. Why then should we speak of a Dravidian *component* or Dravidian features of Hinduism? "All" of Hinduism should be "Dravidian".

It must be stressed that Hinduism in all its variegated heterogeneity is too much of an organic growth to be dissected into sharply delimited components, to allow to draw clear distinctions between elements of different origins. Nevertheless, yielding to our passion for analysis and classification, we may try to define the "Dravidian" constituents of Hinduism.

Apart from relatively small and culturally not very important ethnic groups, there are two large ethnolinguistic clusters of inhabitants in India: the Indo-Aryan and the Indo-Dravidian. 'The Dravidian component of Hinduism' could be defined as that complex of myths, religious beliefs, rites and customs, which are characteristic for and only for the Dravidian ethnolinguistic groups of India either synchronically or historically. Unfortunately even with this rather general pefinition we run into difficulties of theoretical and methodological nature. This is not the platform to go into these very

complex problems; instead I shall give a brief survey of myths, motifs, features and deities, found in South Indian Hinduism which are almost beyond doubt pre-Aryan in South India; which have not been imported as far as we can say into the Dravidian speaking area of India by Brahmins from the North; which are in character quite different from and often contrastive to the religious, ritual and mythical notions and motifs as we know them from the Aryan religious lore and ritual.

Hence such myths, features, rites and deities may (always tentatively) be termed 'Dravidian'. However, while discussing this topic I shall necessarily avoid two problems connected with two large groups of phenomena some of which certainly *are* Dravidian in origin:

(a) Tribal religions
(b) The folk-religion of the village masses

I shall ignore tribal religions simply because most of those communities of India which are designated as tribes are *not* Hindus. By folk-religion of the village-masses I have in mind the innumerable 'village deities' (*grāmadevatā*), spirits, mother-goddesses, deities of lineage (*kuladevatā*), local deities of various sacred spots, etc. These I shall ignore for two reasons: first, because these deities and their legends and myths are strictly locally bound, locally fixed, not forming part of any "Great Tradition" (every little hamlet tends to have its local demon, godling or deity with its own legend or mini-myth; every social group, clan, kinship unit, lineage tends to posses the same); second, because this component of Hinduism has not at all been sufficiently investigated to permit any valid generalizations.

1. While a reconstruction of a systematic "proto-Dravidian" *mythology* is virtually impossible, we may probably point out some basic religious beliefs and structures of ancient Dravidian-speaking peoples. The relative absence of any

complex mythology in wnat could be considered as 'original' Dravidian religion has been vigorously stressed by George L. Hart[1]. Although the relative absence of richly developed, complex and numerous myths seems to be one of the striking features of pre-purāṇic, pre-Aryanized South Indian religion, Hart's conclusion seems to me to be unjust and overhasty. As D. Shulman's more recent research has shown, there is an immense wealth of mythological material hidden in local *purāṇas* - much of it, indeed, late and very probably Sanskritic in origin, but some of it pointing definitely to very deep and ancient layers of mythopoetic creativity of the Tamils and other Dravidian-speaking Hindus. We cannot simply state that myths were practically non-existent in pre-Aryanized Dravidian religion[2].

Leaving aside the rich material hidden in the *sthalapurāṇas* and other local traditions which just about begins to be known to scholarship, there are at least ***three myths*** which may be designated as "great" myths, i.e. such myths which belong to the great textual (literary) tradition of Tamil and which are all traceable to the very beginnings of that tradition when the process of "Sanskritization" had still been rather weak. I have no doubt that the three myths I have in mind can be regarded as Dravidian (in the sense of the above mentioned definition). These three myths are the myth of Murugan's war against Cūr 'Terror ; the myth of Murugan's courtship of and marriage with Vaḷḷi; and the saga of Kaṇṇaki-Pattiṉi.

I am well aware of the fact that there exist other myths which are rather well-spread and well-known, and fixed in literary works, too, such as the myths of Kāñcipuram connected with the goddess Kāmākṣī, or the myths of Madurai connected with the goddess Mīnākṣī, or the myths of Cidambaram, etc. However, all these myths and legends are locally fixed, are place-bound, and always have been, inspite of the fact that they had entered the literary, textual tradition

of Tamil. In contrast, the three myths mentioned above are universal in the sense that they have never been strictly locally bounded or limited, are found in the great textual (literary) tradition from their beginnings and are well-spread in space all over Tamil India and beyond (Kerala, Ceylon and South Indian Sanskrit texts).

2. The first of these three myths - we have about two dozen references to God Murugan and his struggle with the evil forces of Cūr in the earliest layer of Tamil texts- has developed into a dramatic story of large proportions which was incorporated as the central and climactic episode of the myths around Skanda-Kumāra-Kārttikeya after he had been identified with the Dravidian god Murugan, but long before he became the complex South Indian deity Subrahmaṇya.

Two points should be stressed. First, the story of Murugan's struggle against personified fear, *Angst*, called Cūr, is completely unknown to the Sanskrit tradition; in North Indian mythology the war-god Skanda fights against the Asura Tāraka. Second, the etymology of the name of Murugan's enemy, Cūr, is purely Dravidian.[3] This chief amongst the anti-gods was only later Sanskritized into Śūrapadma.

The earliest references, though relatively numerous are meagre as to the amount of information they offer. However, one thing is certain: the basic motif must have been well-known to the ancient Tamils about two thousand years ago and earlier: it is the motif of God Murugan riding on his elephant and slaying with his arrows the forces of evil. The arch-enemy of the God, Cūr, is a malevolent deity with human body and a horse's head who terrorises and kills people, who represents chaos, darkness, and fear, and who is finally overpowered but not completely annihilated by the god's most powerful weapon, the Vēl (spear). I shall analyze and offer a possible interpretation of this Dravidian myth in detail in one of my forthcoming talks.

3. The second of the myths, the story of *Murugan's* courtship of Vaḷḷi, lives on vigorously until this day as a popular topic reappearing in folk-narratives, folk-songs, folk-plays and movies. It's beginnings, though, reach back into the pre-historic period. The first textual evidence is as ancient as Tamil literature itself. Just as the myth of Cūr the story of Vaḷḷi must also have been well-known to the ancient Tamils at the beginning of our era. Just as in the case of the myth of Cūr, the Northern Sanskrit tradition knows nothing of Vaḷḷi for there, the god is a stern bachelor. Vaḷḷi, who, no doubt, represents, in the over-all pattern of the double marriage of a male god, the autochthonous-indigenous, local, Dravidian wife, has become the sweet heart of Tamil bhaktas, and in later developments, the symbol of human soul craving for God.

4. The saga of Kaṇṇaki-Pattiṉi enjoys a central place in Tamil textual tradition as well as in oral literature. The classical text of this saga, *Cilappatikāram* (ca. 450 A. D.), was probably composed only a few centuries after some of the events forming the basis of the story actually occurred (the conflagration of Madurai or the war expedition of the Chera king Ceṅkuṭṭuvan). Apart from this literary version there are about fifty later medieval and modern retellings, which also appeared in print besides oral renditions of the same myth, still sung by local bards.

The story is too well-known to be repeated here. Whatever the original conception of Kaṇṇaki might have been in all the available versions of the myth, she controls a terrific power, which is the fruit of her special virtue - *kaṟpu* - a virtue which ultimately identifies her as a Goddess. In agreement with the notion of sacred power which I shall discuss later, it is in her breasts that her tremendous and potentially destructive power resides. It seems that the Pattiṉi-myth is a version of a basic theme in Indian mythology which obtained special significance in the South (or which may even be of Southern-

Dravidian origin): the conversion of sexual abstinence and moral correctness into power in the form of fire.[4]

5. The investigation of the texual sources in Old Tamil on the one hand and of the popular religious structures on the other hand, points to three fundamental religious notions and concepts of different level, validity, force, and age in the religious set up of the ancestors of the Dravidian speaking peoples of South India in the first millenium B.C. (say between 1000 to 500 B.C.).

a. The first concept, very probably the most ancient one preserved in the universally present contemporary cult of the goddesses, the Ammās, was the concept of the **ūṟ-ammā*, the protective mother-goddess of the *ūṟ* (DED 643), i.e. of the human settlement of the community, of the 'village' (cf. Skt. *grāmadevatā*). This was in most probability a pre-historic concept, possiblyeven pre-Dravidian ,a female goddess o earth and fertilty, a chthonic deity connected with primitive farming, with the firstsettlements.(ūr)ofearlyneolithic agriculturalists. *Ūrammā was the archetype of all the *ammās* in the Dravidian speaking South, connected with agricultural operations, rain and fertility rites on the one hand, and with epidemic diseases on the other hand (cf. the modern Māriyammā who is protectress of health and bringer of rain in addition to being connected with small-pox). *Ūrammā was most probably the neolithic prototype of the ubiquitous Goddess, of Devī, in her many various multiforms: above all of Koṟṟavai, the ferocious female deity of war; of all the great local goddesses - Mīnākṣī, the protectress of the Pāṇḍyas, of fishermen, of Madurai; Nīli. the goddess of Ālaṅkāḍu; Kāmākṣī, the goddess of Kāñcipuram; Vaḷḷi, Nappiṉṉai etc. All these goddesses always *precede* the god in his shrine (historically and in 'purāṇic' time), as the *sthalapurāṇas* show beyond doubt-in Madurai, in Kāñcipuram, in Tiruvālaṅkāṭu, in Chidambaram, and elsewhere. The god has to either overcome, or woo and marry, or squeeze out of the sacred precincts the goddess, to establish

himself. This is a recurrent pattern, a basic structural trait of the local myths. All the local female deities were later incorporated into the Indo-Dravidian Hindu pantheon of the 'Great Tradition' as the *Śaktis* or the powers - consorts of the male gods.

b. A second and a very different concept based most probably on early tribal organization but developed later within the frame of a different social organization in its structural totality was the concept of the four great guardian deities of the Tamil-speaking world. This notion was brought into systematic correlation with the very important and typically Tamil concept of the four *tiṇai*'s or physiographic regions, the four ecological types of mountains, wooded pastures, rivers and fields, and the seashore. The concept was elaborated, formalized and conventionalized by Tamil sages of the early classical age, but it was most probably founded on the actual state of affairs when, some centuries earlier, the ideal ecotypes were still rather separate as different concrete types of habitat of various tribal and demitribal communities.

These were the four protective gods:

1. "The Radiant / Red One", Cĕy (y) ōṉ, called also Cevvēḷ, Murugan, Cēy, Vēlaṉ, finally merging with Skanda-Subrahmaṇya; originally god of palaeolithic hunters, representing also prematrimonial sex, 'free love' (*kaḷavu*), procreation and eternal youth. This god, also associated with the planet Mars, and with the abstract notion of beauty, has developed, from a tribal hunter-god, through a warrior and war-god, into the 'national' god of the Tamils, the patron of their language and literature, of Tamil culture.

Since this series of lectures is on Murugan, I shall make a digression at this point to deal with this deity in some detail.

First of all, we must realize that, as we know him today, Skanda-Subrahmaṇya-Murugan is a complex, composite deity, synthesized from two streams of evolution, one North Indian-

Sanskritic, another South Indian-Dravidian. This fact has been e.g. correctly recognized by the late N. Vanamamalai in several of his Tamil and English writings, but seems to be denied, e.g., by Jean Filliozat.

Murugan alias the Red Vēḷ was very probably originally a tribal god, a proto-hunter, who underwent a transformation into the god of the social elite in such later 'Sangam' works as Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai and Paripāṭal. However, even these two texts still preserve the image of a dual deity - a Brahminic-Sanskritic Skanda-Subrahmaṇya and a tribal Vēlaṉ-Murugan. In both these texts, there is Murugan worshipped inside the temple by kings, nobles, warriors, and Sanskritized clergy, as an anthropomorphic form with six heads and twelve arms-the god of the Tamil elite. But there is also the Murugan worshipped outside the temple by the folk, by the masses-a spear adorned with red cloth and red blossoms, carried by *vēlaṉ*, the folk priest, the shaman, a deity offered bloody sacrifice.

Paripāṭal gives us also the first Tamil version of the birth of Murugan, and this version differs significantly from the Northern versions. According to it, Śiva abstains from sexual union with Umā. His accumulated semen is ejected. Indra intends to create a powerful deity out of it. He asks the seven wives of the seven ṛṣis to bear the child of Śiva. They refuse, for fear of loosing their chastity. Indra then turns Śiva's semen into ash in sacred fire. He divides it into seven portions, and gives it to the Kritika nymphs. One of them refuses to eat, but the others accept. They become pregnant. They deliver six children on a bed of a huge lotus. The children roar like a lion. Indra throws his *vajra* to kill he children. But they fuse into one child with six heads and twelve arms, fight Indra with several weapons, and Indra makes peace with the child.

The original Tamil Murugan was the son of Koṟṟavai, the Mother-Goddess of war and victory. His father's name is never mentioned. Indeed, he *has no* father. This concept is

very probably connected with the very ancient, very primitive idea of women conceiving and bearing children without the participation of males.

Later myth-makers, however, must find a father for Murugan. They do not accept Rudra or Agni as his father, although either one of these gods is father of the Northern Skanda. Why? Because neither Rudra nor Agni are important and well-known gods in the Tamil country. On the contrary, it is Śiva, the Great God, the god who emerged with the development of powerful feudal kingdoms in the South - the god-king of the Tamils - who is important in Tamilnadu. Hence, the Tamil myth-makers substitute Śiva as the father of the composite Skanda-Murugan in the South. According to Sanskrit sources, Skanda was not born of any mother. But the Dravidian Murugan was the son of Koṟṟavai; he already had a mother. Only a father had to be found at this later stage of the economic, social, political and cultural development of Tamil society. It is significant that all the myths centred around Agni are transferred to Śiva and Śiva is made the father of Murugan. Umā is not his natural mother.

Ultimately, even Murugan may be a later development of an original theriomorphic form connected with totemism - a cock or a peacock, or both; or even an elephant. But I do not want to reach so far back into prehistory, and also to overreach myself in sheer speculation. It should be said, though, that the composite Skanda-Murugan image, as presented in the Tirumurukāṟṟupppaṭai and the Paripāṭal, was more or less readily accepted by the Tamil Skandapurāṇa, and fossilized in that text to such an extent that, since then, it resisted any substantial or even minor change and modification.

2. "The Dark (Black, Dark-blue) One" called Māyōṉ correlated with the wooded pasture-lands, as the god of the seminomadic pastoralists. He was identified with Māl, i.e. Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa, and in his fully Sanskritized form, is worshipped

throughout South India. There is a very deep underlying similarity between these two young gods, the Red and the Black One, and it is maybe not accidental that the red and the black colours play such important role in 'neo-Dravidian' cultural-political symbolism. The worship of a vigorous, splendid young male god points probably to very deeply prehistoric layers, as was independently suggested by Jean Filliozat and myself some time ago.

3. Another protective deity was termed simply "The King", Vēntaṉ (DED 4549) and it is possible that another and perhaps more ancient name of this god was *Kō, *Kōṉ "King" (DED 1810). He was correlated with the settled communities of the more advanced agricultural type of society and with the beginnings of township and urbanization. Obviously, this deity has played a very great role later in the development of the king-god / god-king notion, of the South Indian temple complex (kō-y-il) and in the socio-political and religious evolution of South Indian ruling dynasties. Since, in the Indo-Aryan lore, Indra was believed to be the king of the *devas* the ancient Dravidian Kō = Vēntaṉ was identified with Indra.

4. The region of the seashore was said to be the domain of Varuṇaṉ (< Varuṇa). It is possible that this Aryanization represents a 'lord of the ocean', possibly termed *Kaṭalōṉ in proto-Tamil; he might have been the deity of fishermen communities, and later correlated with maritime contacts and overseas trade. Though the actual term *Kaṭalōṉ does not occur anywhere in the texts in this meaning, a few old Tamil texts speak of deities (*teyvam*) of the sea (*kaṭal*), and, more importantly, on the Malayalam-speaking coast of Kerala we have a female deity of the sea called Kaḍalamma.[8]

c. The third basic religious concept found in ancient Tamil sources is the concept of a dangerous, potentially malevolent, but sometimes auspicious sacred power which has its seat in awe-inspiring natural places (like mountain-summits

steep slopes with water-falls, deep sea), in places connected with critical human activities (threshing-floor, battleground), in crucially important implements and tools made by men (like weapons, drums), in fear evoking animals (tiger, elephant, snake), in some trees, in dangerously vexing parts of human body (female breasts and pudenda, particularly after having attained puberty), and in the most powerful god Murugan. The Tamil term for this sacred force is *aṇaṅku* (DED 56b). In some ways, this is the most fundamental 'prime' of all ancient Tamil, possibly Dravidian, religious concepts, but it is also the most abstract one in its consequences. There are obvious indications that it was connected with shamanistic magic and the ritual dance of possession (*veṟi*) as well as with mantic capabilities.

d. Finally, *evil* was represented by a malevolent, dreadful force which was called *cūr* 'cruelty; fear, terror' (DED 2250), and which became personified as the archdemon Cūraṉ (later, Cūrapatumaṉ), the enemy of the most potent deity and the culture-hero of the Dravidians, Murugan.

Two of the four great protective gods - Cēyōṉ and Māyōṉ, 'The Red One' and 'The Black One' - played an enormous role in one of the most vital, if not *the* most vital, developments within Hinduism, in the movement towards *bhakti* - intense personal devotion. This form of devotionalism which tries to solve problems that cannot be solved rationally by philosophy, is a fairly late solution in India, but it makes explicit a tendency which is very ancient as a latent trend: the appeal to emotions to transcend a rational impasse - obviously a trend which reappears again and again as the Tamil solution.

It is significant that the beginnings of this solution called *bhakti* - which may be defined as a devotion conceived as compelling, unconditional love of god, and the god's response - appear, for the first time, in the form inwhich we

know it as living religion, in South India, in the Tamil-speaking country, and are connected with two gods originally almost without doubt Dravidian: Cēyōṉ-Murugan and Māyōṉ-Tirumāl.

FOOTNOTES

1. For example in "The Nature of Tamil Devotion" (Xeroxed) p. 3: "Indeed, it (= South Indian Religion) appears to have had virtually no mythology and no coherent notion of another world." The subsequent research performed for example by D. Shulman has completely disproved this statement. Also, the Dravidian-speaking tribes appear to have a rich and complex mythology.

2. I do not know of any society (including our contemporary western society) which would be completely 'demythologized' in the sense that it would not possess any myths.

3. Cf. DED 2250 which gives a clear purely Dravidian etymology of the word *cūr*.

4. This is an insight which I owe to Brenda E. F. Beck.

5. In the meantime I have found that the Tamil fishermen of the Madras coast, the Paradavar, worship, too, a 'Mother-Sea' (Kaṭalammai).

THE DRAVIDIAN NOTION OF THE SACRED

1. Two notions appeared and reappeared lately in the writings of Indological scholars while discussing particular features of South Indian Hinduism: the phenomenon of *localization*, and the idea that the *sacred* is *dangerous* and potentiallly *polluting*.

2. These two notions appeared sporadically, and sometimes were articulated with clarity and force, but at first no one really followed up either of them systemically, relating them to the ancient Tamil textual evidence. Thus, in 1969, Kees W. Bolle in a thought-provoking paper entitled 'Speaking of a Place'[1]), stressed the *primacy of place* and wrote: "God is universal because he is there" (p. 129.). Bolle termed South Indian Hinduism "topographical religiosity" and recognized that the 'symbolism of being there' linked the most elementary devotion of the villages to great bhakti theologies, and that this 'symbolism of being there' could be seen as the mainstay of Hinduism in the vicissitudes of its history. In 1971, the phenomenon of localization was made the topic to be discussed in the Interregional Seminar at the Südasien Institut Heidelberg University. I participated in the discussions. The results were published in 1972.[2])

3. It is thrilling to read in Emeneau (1938) about the Toda conception of *sacred place*. Emeneau shows that the Toda word *no.ṛ* (i. e. Tamil *nāṭu*) "itself is the god"; and he uses the term 'sacred place' writing that *towno.ṛ* denotes 'the sacred place which is god'. He says: "We must conclude that the 'sacred place' and the 'god' are the same thing" (p. 140).

Thus, Emeneau has formulated briefly and succintly for the Todas what has later been described as characteristic of South Indian Hinduism in general.

What does this phenomenon of localization mean? It manifests itself, among other things, as David Dean Shulman has recently shown, in *the* distinguishing feature of Tamil myths - namely that the mythic action is persistently localized. More importantly, in contrast to the Vedic sacrificial complex, all Tamil religious symbols are absolutely localized. The mobility of the Vedic sacrifice was noted by Louis Renou (1953) who has shown that the Vedic sacrificial system was not tied to specific localities. In contrast, already in the Tamil epics we have clear instances of localized cults, and the notion that a divinity is inherent in a particular place or object seems to belong to the very oldest stratum of Indo-Dravidian civilization. As Shulman has shown, Tamil myths, too, illustrate this prime importance of place. The deity of the shrine cannot be moved from the sacred spot (hence the necessity of the utsava icons); the shrine itself can never be detached from its place just as it can never be destroyed. Why?
4. The answer, according to my conviction, is : because the *place* itself, the *kṣetra*, is *sacred.* To use the term which is used by the Todas, the *no.ṛ*, the *place* itself, *is god.* Now we may ask: What kind of god? What makes the place sacred? What is inherent in a particular place that it becomes a sacred *kṣetra*?

The answer I believe was provided in 1975 by George L. Hart in his important though controversial book *The Poems of Ancient Tamil.* I cannot agree with a great many points of Hart's provocative book but I believe that his insight concerning the sacred power is worth investigating against the background of actual Tamil textual evidence. Is George Hart right when he maintains that there existed, in ancient Tamil civilization, the notion of a sacred power called *aṇaṅku*? To test Hart's hypothesis is the aim of this talk.

A. It is rather safe to begin with the etymological approach. DED and DEDS (under 56 b) say *aṇaṅku* v. to suffer, be distressed, be slain; to afflict; n. pain, affliction, killing; and the related etyma found in Kannaḍa, Tuḷu and Telugu, have an over-all meaning of 'suppressing, depressing, ruining, destroying'. Apart from these meanings, we have in Kannaḍa and Telugu meanings which are related and may prove important for our investigation; 'to subdue, control; to hide; to submit, to subject, to yield'. In Tamil Lexicon we find 'pain, affliction, suffering, disease; fear; goddess who takes away one's life by awakening lust or by other means; beautiful damsel, as resembling a celestial damsel; devil; dancing under religious excitement, especially possession by Skanda; beauty; form; young offspring; *aṇaṅkuṭākku* in *Tirukkuṟaḷ* 918 means possession by a demoness of lust or harm.

Obviously, we are confronted with too many meanings (some of them can be eliminated as too late or only lexical). Surely these meanings show either a very different nature of the texts in which they are found or different stages of semantic evolution. There is, however, no one meaning among them which would account for George Hart's 'sacred power'. Dr. N. Subramanian's *Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index* (1966) gives us twelve meanings, including frightening deity or source of fear in general, but also divinity and domestic god in more general sense.

Considering the lexical meanings , found in dictionaries, and the entries of the TL, DED-DEDS and Pre-Pallavan Index, the one more general underlying semantic content of the term *aṇaṅku* seems to be a *fear-provoking divine* or *demoniac force*, and taken with the basic etymology (oppress, depress; subdue, control; hide) it points to a force which functions oppressively as a hidden subduing factor; an awe-inspiring power, causing fear, affliction and pain.

B. I have set out to investigate the contexts and the meaning of the term *aṇaṅku* as found in about four dozen pla-

ces in old Tamil texts. What appeared from this investigation supports Hart's interpretation, though the meaning of 'sacred power' is never given in any dictionary. Only a meaning of hieratic, sacred power, which could be dangerous but not always malevolent, covers all contexts in which the term is found in the texts of Old Tamil. It is important to stress that, in contrast to *aṇaṅku* which could be both painful and / or beneficial, the Tamils had a term for a malicious, terror-provoking force which was *always* destructive: *cūr* (DED 2250).

Having established, on a careful and detailed investigation of all the various contexts in which the two terms (*aṇaṅku, cūr*) occur in old Tamil texts, the underlying meaning of *aṇaṅku* as 'sacred power' (in agreement with G.L.Hart), I shall in the following deal with *aṇaṅku* so as to answer these questions:

a. What or where is the *seat* of *aṇaṅku*? Where does it dwell?
b. Who is the *source* of *aṇaṅku*? With what agent is it combined?
c. What is the *function* of *aṇaṅku*? What does it cause?
d. Is it beneficial, malevolent, or both? Or neither?
e. What is done to evoke it, and to remove it?
f. How did the concept of *aṇaṅku* develop in time?

5. The first question to be answered is thus: What or where is the *seat* of *aṇaṅku* ? Where is it to be found?

Very often, particular in the earliest strata of Tamil texts, *aṇaṅku* is said to dwell in different natural environments almost all of which have one feature in common: they are large, lofty and awe-inspiring. Thus the most frequent dwelling place of *aṇaṅku* are the peaks of mountains (Puṟam 52. 1, Akam 22. 1) or mountain-slopes (Puṟam 151. 11). Another natural habitat of *aṇaṅku* is water, in particular the sea and sea-harbours (Akam 240. 8, Aiṅk. 174.1). Some texts mention trees as the seat of *aṇaṅku* (Patiṟṟup. 88.6). *aṇaṅku* dwells not only in natural phenomena but also in man-made things: thus

Puṟam 247.4 speaks of "the front of the house where *aṇaṅku* stays" and elsewhere we hear of the gateway of a fortified place inhabited by *aṇaṅku* (Maturaik. 578,cf. also Patiṟ.62.11). In such contexts, *aṇaṅku* represented obviously a beneficial, protective force, just like in Puṟam 392.8 which mentions the two (kinds of) *kaḷam* which is the proper place where *aṇaṅku* dwells. These two kinds of *kaḷam* (DED 1160) are the threshing floor and the battle-field; in the heroic and agricultural society of ancient Tamilnadu these two places were naturally filled in a special manner with the secred power. Akam 99.9 mentions a temple filled with sacred power (*aṇaṅkuṭai nakar*).

Another large set of phenomena in which the sacred power was thought to be immanent were certain objects, instruments and weapons. Thus Porunar. 20 mentions in this connection the *yāḻ* 'harp', Akam 167.8 and Maturaik. 140 weapons. An interesting object said to be connected with *aṇaṅku* were the molucca beans (*Caesalpina bonducella,* DED 1134 *kaḻaṅku*) used in shamanistic divination techniques[8], cf. Naṟ. 282.5, and especially Naṟ.47.8 which mentions *aṇaṅku aṟi kaḻaṅku,* i.e. the molucca beans which (reveal) the knowledge of sacred power.

In a few poems, *aṇaṅku* is also linked with some animals; again, the animals mentioned are all strong, awe-inspiring animals-the lion, the elephant (Kuṟunt.308, Perumpāṇ. 258, Porunar.139); Naṟ.168.8. mentions snake (*aravu*) as possessing *aṇaṅku.*

Certain deities and demons were, too, believed to 'have' *aṇaṅku*. Among the deities, Murugan is most frequently mentioned as the one who has the sacred power (e.g. Puṟ. 299.6 which speaks of *aṇaṅkuṭai murukaṉ kōṭṭam* 'the temple of *aṇaṅku*-possessing Murugan'). Kalit.105.15 mentions Indra filled with *aṇaṅku,* and in Parip. Tirumāl is described a few times as having *aṇaṅku*. The *avuṇar,* too, possess this supernatural power (Puṟ.174.1 and elsewhere).

These and similar contexts show that "the sacred" was manifested through a power which was believed to be inherent in certain places, objects, deities and demons - a power which was dangerous, potentially malevolent, but could also be beneficial, and, as I shall show, had to be diagnosed and controlled. The most "original" meaning or conception of aṇaṅku seems to be indicated in Puṟam 247 which speaks of a *place* in front of the hut of forest-men (*kāṉavar*) filled with this ominous power.

What is most interesting, however, is that aṇaṅku resided, too, in certain parts of the human body, particularly under certain circumstances. It is quite frequently described as dwelling in female breasts (Akam 161,177, Naṟ.9, Aiṅk.363, 250, Porunar.35-6). From the study of these and other texts it is clear that aṇaṅku takes its special seat in female breasts particularly after she had attained puberty and became sexually desirable[4]). Besides, a woman may be *possessed* by aṇaṅku as an afflicting, troublesome force. In the first case, the *aṇaṅku* in her breasts vexes men 's heart by arousing their passion and desire. In the second case, the girl is herself vexed and troubled by aṇaṅku whose source is elsewhere. In such case, there are again two alternatives: either the woman is 'genuinely' possessed by the sacred power of Murugan, or she is in fact 'possessed' by love-longing for her man and this love-illness is diagnosed wrongly as the 'genuine' possession by the god's *aṇaṅku.* For the 'true' possession cf. e.g. Akam 98 in which the heroine is said to be afflicted by *murukaṉ ār aṇaṅku* "the hard sacred power of Murugan", or Kuṟiñcip. 174-5 which mentions women dancing under the spell of the sacred power of Neṭuvēḷ.

6. The next problem to be attacked is what or who is the *source* or *cause* of aṇaṅku. Here, again, etymology and semantics is of help: places, objects, animals, and even persons are said to *have*, to *possess* (*uṭai*) the sacred power, not to cause or generate it. Another verb, used with aṇaṅku, is

uṟu 'dwell, reside; be joined with'. Thus, after a careful investigation of all the loci in old Tamil texts which mention aṇaṅku, we must admit that we are not in the position to say what or who is the source, the cause, the generator of aṇaṅku. The magic, supernatural, sacred power ***is*** simply ***there***, it is 'being had'; in other words, aṇaṅku is manifested as ***inherent***. Among all the persons, human, divine or semidivine, the one who most frequently 'has' *aṇaṅku* is Murugan; in Naṟṟiṇai 34.7., the sacred power is even qualified as ***his*** *aṇaṅku*; however, not even Murugan is described as generating, causing, being the source of aṇaṅku; he, too, ***has*** it inherently.

7. What did aṇaṅku itself *cause*? *How* did it manifest itself, and with what kinds of 'patients' was it connected?

Obviously, in its non-personalized form, as the manifestation of unknown forces in space-time, in nature, aṇaṅku was thought of as a capricious force which evoked reverential fear, awe, even dread. The sacred power which emanated from Murugan and Tirumal, vexed their enemies, filled them with fear, and, in the case of Murugan, vexed the human recipients of this force. In one case at least, we know that Murugu, in order not to scare his devotee and not to fill him with dread, witheld his *aṇaṅku* and manifested himself in a mild, friendly form (Tirumur. 289-90). This, and other contexts, notably from Paripāṭal, would indicate that the divine *aṇaṅku* could fill the devotees with reverential fear which could be hardly bearable. However, the sacred power could also function as destructive force. It is very clearly stated in a hymn to Murugan (Parip.8); the companion of the heroine warns the hero not to swear by gracious Murugan; if he does (and does not keep his oath), "certainly the lance (*vēl*) of the god will devour him by virtue of (the god's, *or* the spear's) graceless *aṇaṅku* (*aruḷil* aṇaṅku)". It is important to note that in this context, the god is full of grace (*aruḷ muruku*) but his weapon can manifest grace-less power (*aruḷ-il* aṇaṅku).

The functioning of aṇaṅku in human recipients represents often the true power of possession which caused particularly in women a kind of 'sickness' (*nōy*) which had to be dealt with controlled, removed. However, apart from this possession by aṇaṅku which must have been regarded as dangerous and unwanted, the same sacred force emanating from Murugan caused obviously a sacred possession, a hieratic trance which was welcomed and very probably self-induced. When this kind of possession was organized and controlled by a professional shaman of the god, by the *vēlaṉ*, we enter the sphere of the regulated contact with the sacred, such as we know today among the tribal communities like the Kuṟumbas or Iruḷas. An early mention of this kind of possession may be found in Kuṟiñcip. 174-7 (169: We stood shaking like peacocks possessed by terror—provoking *cūr*)...We lock our fingers like the leaves in the garlands twining round the *kaṭampu* tree with thick and strong trunk, resembling the women possessed by Neṭuvēḷ's aṇaṅku dancing on the *kaḷam*.

In Akam 7 by Kayamaṉār (ca. 220 A.D.) we have, on the other hand, allusion to the genuine and unwanted possession of a woman by the sacred power. The mother (or foster mother) warns the girl that, having reached puberty, she must be protected, and should not go anywhere beyond the gates, "for the old places of the ancient town are filled with the supernatural power which (could) assault (you) (*tākku* aṇaṅku)." What if aṇaṅku indeed *did* assault a woman? The clue to such situation is provided by Akam 98 in which the mother (*aṉṉai*), not realizing that her daughter can be cured only by the touch of the chest of her lover, has invited the wise soothsaying women (*mutuvāy poy val peṇṭir*) who have diagnosed the illness of the girl as genuine possession by Murugan's 'hard *aṇaṅku*'. The remedy is described in some detail: it includes the invitation of the spearman, *vēlaṉ*, Murugan's shaman-priest, who comes, invokes the god, dances the *veṟi* dance while the intoxicated and infatuated women shake and swing, and finally the god would descend

and bestow (*nalkuvaṉ*) his favour and the exhausted, sick body of the possessed girl will be restored to its original healthy splendour. The god's presence and favour is manifested by a specific fragrance (*veṟi kamaḻ*) filling the *kaḷaṉ*-field and indicating the rise of the god's sacred power.

8. Let us now briefly trace the development of the concept of *aṇaṅku* in time.

It seems almost certain that in our earliest texts, the term designates an anonymous, impersonal power, an IT dwelling in certain places, objects, animals and persons, pervading them and being inherent in them.

However, the process of personification seems to have begun very early, and soon, by metonymy, the dangerous sacred power assumes the meaning of a personalized demoniac-divine force, a demon or a god, a goblin or a deity. The early stage of such process may be seen e.g. in Naṟ. 319.6 which speaks of "the middle of the night...when aṇaṅku's *legs rise*"[5]: the sacred power is seen here as groping or advancing or walking through the dark night. The process of metonymy has set in e.g. in Akam 240.8 which speaks of the cool harbour inhabited by *aṇaṅku*- the deity worshipped with folded hands; in Naṟ. 155.6 an adorned maid is addressed as "may be a water-nymph (*or* divinity, *or* demoness) which dwells and abides in the vastness of the sea."[6]

A decisive change in the conception of aṇaṅku comes with its complete personification as demon or goblin, often paired with *pēy* (DED 3635): thus Muturaik.632 speaks of the dead of night when vampires (*pēy*) and demons (aṇaṅku) roam about assuming different forms[7]). From the same text it is clear that *pēy* and aṇaṅku were two different kinds of supernatural beings, for in verses 106 ff. they are in clear contrast: while aṇaṅku is connected with an auspicious and happy state of the city, *pēy* definitely indicates a devastated, inauspicious situation. Perumpāṇ. 457-9 connects beauti-

fully aṇaṅku- in the meaning of demons or goblins- with the god Cey (=Murugan) and his mother Koṟṟavai. There are also contexts in which aṇaṅku very probably means a household deity, a domestic in-dwelling god, *the* personified sacred power of the *home* (cf. Maturaik. 164, 578).

It seems that by the time when the originally impersonal sacred power immanent in certain objects began to be thought of as a personified dangerous force moving and living on its own it was adopted as a fitting addition to the autochthonous Tamil demonology.

A further and final stage of the personalization of aṇaṅku which survived as such is a concept of aṇaṅku as a *female* demon, a kind of fairy which was more often than not dangerous and malicious but always attractive. It seems that, for the first time-chronologically speaking-we encounter this conception of aṇaṅku in Parip. 12.57 (ca.350 - 400 A.D.) which compares a playful and coquettish behaviour of a woman towards a man with that of aṇaṅk-*orutti*, a kind of fairy. In decisively later texts, all other meanings of the term aṇaṅku tend to disappear in favour of this one meaning of a dangerous fairy which vexes and even slays young men. When we reach the Tirukkuṟaḷ (ca.450 -500 A.D.), this meaning is well-established: in 918, aṇaṅku appears among distichs dedicated to courtezans, among such companions as corpses in a dark room and trecherous women; in 1801, the man in his love infatuation asks whether he sees a human female, a choice pea-hen or a malevolent fairy; etc. The tradition of an aṇaṅku which attacks (*tākku*) is old; so is the tradition of the pseudo-possession by aṇaṅku conceived as the vexation of a passionate desire; but the personification of aṇaṅku as a female and malicious fairy is later. This concept of a pretty fairy which vexes and slays youths, identified with Mohini, is quite prevalent in all didactic texts between the 5th-9th Cent. A.D.[8] Medieval dictionaries explain the term as also used for beautiful women who resemble celestial damsels, and as

meaning beauty as such. In premodern and early modern Tamil poetry, the two qualities of 'beauty' and 'divineness' were responsible for such usage as tamiḻaṇaṅku 'the divine damsel of Tamil' (Sundaram Pillai, 1855-1897).

9. Concluding we may probably say this: The sacred was thought of by the early Tamils as a force immanent in certain places, objects, and persons, and not as the property of well-defined transcendental gods. The term used for the sacred was-as George Hart rightly guessed- aṇaṅku, originally conceived of as an impersonal, anonymous, awe-inspiring supernatural power inherent in some phenomena but not identified or confused with them in particular. This power was so independent of the places, objects and persons in which it was believed to inhere that it could precede or survive them. It was capricious, dangerous, neither auspicious nor malevolent in itself.

Coming back to the very beginning of this talk, I suggest that the *immanence of the sacred* - a sacred force inherent in certain places-objects, beings at certain times - is a heritage in Hinduism of the ancient, non-Vedic conception reflected in the old Tamil notion of aṇaṅku. And the symbolism of 'being-there' is a closely related phenomenon, and another non-Vedic Dravidian heritage.

I must end with a critical note: the fact that the term aṇaṅku does designate, in *some early contexts*, an impersonal sacred power, immanent in certain places, objects and beings, does not - I repeat, does, emphatically, *not* - provide a full and unconditional sanction for the ideas expressed by George L.Hart about the sacred and about the nature of Tamil devotion. While I do agree with Hart's fundamental insight concerning the interpretation of the term aṇaṅku in some contexts, I do disagree with him in many conclusions which he has drawn from his approach. In particular, we must be careful *not* to take his rather personal interpretations *as if* they would be inherent and necessarily present in the data themsel-

ves. I am sorry to say that some recent scholars have been guilty of such rather uncritical acceptance of Hart's very personal and highly controversial conclusions.

One more, and last, remark: the mobility of the Vedic sacrifice was mentioned in the beginning of this talk. And, in our first talk, we pointed to Murugan and Māl as the two indigenous South Indian deities connected with the beginnings of bhakti. I would like to stress the fact that, in the so-called Sangam texts, Vedic sacrifices are more frequently mentioned than temples dedicated to gods, though temples are not unknown. It is important to realize that it was at the *end* of the so-called Sangam Age that the notion of immanence of the sacred in the sacred place asserted itself all over South India, and temples began to assume importance. In fact, by the fifth—sixth Cent. A.D., these developments went hand in hand in Tamil India: the fixation of ritual in the Āgamas; second, the assertion of the *immanence* of the sacred in certain *places*; and, subsequently and logically, the *emergence* of the *temple* as the centre of religious, cultural and social life of the people.

I am happy to say that this conclusion agrees with the recent paper of R. Nagaswamy presented at the International Conference- Seminar of Tamil Studies in Madurai.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Myths and Symbols, Studies in Honor of Mircea Eliade,* Chicago, 1969.
2. *South Asian Digest of Regional Writing,* Vol. 1, 1972.
3. The technique of molucca beans was as follows: The unripe beans were strewn before the image of Murugan by the shaman-priest who chose one of them according to certain occult indications to diagnose the nature of a person's possession or to advise what should be done. The priest (*vēlaṉ*) is qualified by the attribute *mutuvāy* 'ancient wisdom'. This context shows, again, that aṇaṅku was not only dangerous and vexing, but could also be beneficial. Another context proving

beyond doubt the beneficial-protective nature of aṉaṅku is Parip.XIII.6 in which the protective discus-weapon of Tirumāl in his gracious aspect is said to possess aṉaṅku.

4. Kuṟunt.337 throws some light on this: it first describes the change of a young girl into a mature young woman by enumerating all the *lakṣaṇas* of such change, and then stressing the fact that she afflicts men with desire and longing.

5. *aṇaṅku kāl kiḷarum...naṭunāḷ.*

6. *peruṅkaṭal parappin amarntuṟai aṇaṅkū.*

7. *pēyum aṇaṅkum uruvukoṇṭēyppa.*

8. Cf. Aintiṇaiyeḻupatu 47.4 (7th Cent.), Paḻamoḻināṉūṟu 8.3 (ca. 700 A.D.), Ācārakkōvai 72.2 (ca.825 A.D.), Tiṇaimalai nūṟṟaimpatu 47.2 (8th - 9th Cent.).

THE MAGNIFICENT MYTH OF MURUGAN AND CŪR

1. In the Tamil tradition, it is the decisive battle of Murugan the saviour of gods and men against the embodiment of evil and fear. Cūr, which is the central and pivotal episode of the entire myth of the god Subrahmaṇya. This is in sharp contrast to the Aryan, Sanskritic tradition which does originally know nothing of a Cūr, Cūraṉ or Śūrapadma. There, the main adversary of Skanda-Kumāra-Kārtikeya is Tāraka, an *asura* usually combined, identified or associated with the mountain Krauñca. This is in agreement with the overall Aryan tradition of god's interference with mountains: Kṛṣṇa lifts up Govardhana, Viṣṇu supports Mandara, Indra demolishes mountain-tops, Durgā destroys Mandaragiri while killing Mahiṣa. Subrahmaṇya is, in this tradition, first the killer of Mahiṣa who takes refuge in the mountain Krauñca (Vanaparvan of the MhBh). Later, it is Tāraka (or Bāṇa) who replace Mahiṣa, and in the later portions of MhBh and in Kalidāsa's Kumārasambhava it remains finally Tāraka who is the main enemy of the god. Ancient Tamil literature contains only a few faint allusions to the "split mountain" (e.g. Tirumuruk. 266), and one of the commentators on this text notes that the mountain is called *kuruku* -the Tamil equivalent of *krauñca* 'heron'. This motif is clearly imported into the Tamil tradition from the North. Parip. of course knows it, and, finally, Kantapurāṇam develops the episode: Tāraka combines with Krauñca which under diverse forms fights against Murugan, and they are both finally destroyed by Murugan's spear. Notice that while the spear is the weapon of the god in the South, in Sanskrit sources it is a flame which pierces Krauñca.

2. Whether in association with Krauñca or not, it is Tāraka who is the main adversary of Subrahmaṇya in northern texts. A completely different picture emerges from ancient Tamil sources. There, the chief enemy of Murugan is Cūr> Cūraṉ> Cūrapatmaṉ who takes refuge in the ocean in the shape of a monstrous mango tree and is as such destroyed by the god. This is an indigenous-autochthonous Tamil myth which has presumably nothing to do with any Sanskritic source. Only in later Tamil literature, in Kantapurāṇam and the *sthalapurāṇas*, Tāraka reappears as the brother of Cūraṉ in the company of Siṁhāmukha, another brother of Śūrapadma. Of this trio, Cūrapatmaṉ remains the principal actor and the chief of the antigods. Observe, too, that in the Tamil tradition, this chief antigod is not completely annihilated but saved since he reappeas after the destruction of the dangerous mango tree as the emblem and the mount of Murugan, i.e. as his rooster and his peacock.

3. Let us now examine first the earliest references to Murugan's battle with Cūr in the ancient Tamil textual sources.

3.1. There are several dozen references to Cūr in the bulk of old Tamil texts. I have found Cūr mentioned in Puṟanāṉūṟu, Akanāṉūṟu, Naṟṟiṇai, Kuṟuntokai, Aiṅkuṟunūṟu ,Patiṟṟuppattu and Porunarāṟṟuppaṭai; among the somewhat later texts, in Kalittokai, Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai and Paripāṭal, and of course in Cilappatikāram. Not all these allusions refer to Cūr as the personified Evil destroyed by Murugan. There are, in fact, three types of references to Cūr in the earliest sources:

a. Statistically most numerous are allusions to ***cūr*** in the meaning of impersonal fear, of general terror.

b. About 8-10 references are to female *cūr*.

c. The rest, some dozen references at most, are to the personified male Cūr, the enemy of Murugan.

2.2. The first 'type' of *cūr* may very probably be considered as the most ancient. This is also the original lexical-etymological meaning of the word (cf. DED 2250 *cūr* v.to frighten, be cruel, n. fear, suffering, cruelty etc.); the commentators (e.g. on Kuṟ. 52 or 105, Naṟ.7) say explicitely *cūr accamumām*. The word *cūr* in this meaning of 'fear, fright, terror' occurs in such combinations as *cūr pukal naṉantalai* (Akam 303.5) or *cūruṭaiyaṭukkam* (Kuṟ. 376.2, Naṟ. 359.9, Akam 198, 359 etc.- this being obviously a formula). *Cūr* in the sense of 'fear', as the attribute of a place-a mountain-slope, a water-spring etc. -occurs in many contexts in the ancient poetry simply in the meaning of 'frightening, terror-provoking', and *this* meaning of impersonal *cūr*, of a feeling, an emotion, an attribute is most probably the original meaning of the word, analogical to the original semantic charge of the term aṇaṅku discussed in the previous essay.

2.3. Soon, this impersonal quality, the 'frightfulness of a place, was also regarded as *personified*. Cūr became a person, Fear, Terror with capital T, a metaphysical, transcendental, almost divine Terror, and, finally, a terrorizing Force in the shape of a monstrous being. This being (unlike aṇaṅku) was either male or female. A divine female Fear, a frightful goddess was termed Cūrmakaḷ (Akam 198.17 and elsewhere), and often appeared in company of others, similar to the ancient Greek Furies, termed in Tamil *cūr-ara-makaḷir* (e.g. Akam 32.7, 162.25, Kuṟ.53). These Furies had various functions. They appear e.g. in Tirumuruk. 41 as daughters of the forests, divine but savage, a kind of cruel nymphs who are ravishing but fearful (*ara* is probably <Skt. *hara* 'ravishing'). In Kuṟ. 53, the goddesses of fear are evoked while an oath is made (*cūraramakaḷiroṭu uṟṟa cūḷ*).

2.4. However, what interests us is a development of the impersonal fear, an IT, into a personal male demon or demigod of Terror who after a few centuries evolved into the fullfledged chief of the antigods-Cūraṉ-Sūrapadma. *This* conception of Cūr, too, is found in the most ancient Tamil

sources. And it is this personalized male Cūr who becomes the main enemy of Murugan.

In Puṟanāṉūṟu, there is only one reference to the Cūr of this kind, but it is very important because it is formulated as we shall see in different terms from all other similar allusions. Puṟ. 23.4. by Kallāṭaṉār (ca. 210 A.D.) speaks of ***cūr navai murukaṉ cuṟṟatt'aṉṉa*** "the hordes of Murugan who had killed Cūr". This may be one of the earliest references to the myth under discussion.

What is very important is the fact that almost *all* other references to the myth are *formulaic* in nature. This means that the basic traits, events and features of the myth must have been well-known and generally accepted and understood by the people of Tamilnadu in the early centuries A.D., otherwise they could not have been employed by the poets as a well-established formula in casual allusion.

The formula is of the following shape:
"the long spear-with the shining blade-which has cleft asunder-the chief Cūr",

e.g. Tirumuruk.46 cūr ***mutal -taṭinta -cuṭar ilai- neṭu vēl.*** Cf. with this formulaic expression e.g. Akam 59.10 ***cūr maruṅk' aṟutta cuṭar ilai neṭu vēl*** 'the long spear with shining blade which has cut ***cūr*** in half'. And with this utterance we may again compare Tirumur. 275 ***cūr maruṅk'aṟutta.*** This formula which extolls the spear of Murugan that had cut asunder Cūr, appears either verbatim or with slight differences in a number of other texts: in Patiṟṟuppattu II. 5-6, in Parip., Tirumuruk., Kalittokai, Cilap. Since the rather early Patiṟṟup. II alludes to this mythical event, it must have been well-known at the time of Naṭuñcēralātaṉ Imayavarampaṉ, i.e. in ca. 150 A.D. The king who had destroyed his enemies at sea (were they sea-pirates?) and changed its colour with the blood oozing from his spear is compared to Murugan who, mounted on his elephant destroyed Cūr. What is striking is that the wording of the Patiṟṟuppattu is almost identical with the later

Paripāṭal V.4, and again with Parip. IX. 70 (composed by another poet). All this shows high degree of formalization. Therefore, the myth must have been well-known and well-established in Tamilnadu already in the *first* century A.D.

3.1. Let us now look closer at these references. Perumpāṇ. 457-8 speaks of Cēy who killed the cruel Cūr (*kaṭuṅcūr ko<u>n</u>ṟa - paimpūṇ cēy*). Patiṟṟup. II. 5-6 was just mentioned. Next, we come to Tirumuruk. This text mentions the motif of Murugan's destruction of Cūr three times, in 46, 60 and 275. In 46 we hear the echo of what had been said in Patiṟṟup. and of what will reappear in Parip., namely "the long spear with shining blade which had cleft asunder *cūr mutal*". In 60, we hear about Murugan who had split open *māmutal* 'the base of the mango', or, alternatively, 'the mango-chief'. And in 275 we are told about Cūr being cut in half (or, alternatively, being destroyed with his lineage since the word *maruṅku* has both meanings). There is one more reference in 57: *irupēr uruvi<u>n</u> orupēr iyaṟkai*. This, according to the commentators, refers to the body of Cūr—one huge body of two shapes, one the body of man, another the shape of an animal (thus Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar), probably in allusion to the head of a horse which Cūr was said to wear. Or, with Parimēlaḻakar, this refers to the one body of Cūr having two names, i.e. Cūraṉ and Patumaṉ (this interpretation being less probable).

Most of the commentators consider the mango-tree to have been the form adopted by Cūr-as also the later final myth of Kantapurāṇam IV. 13 explicitely has it. However, according to Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar, there was *another* mango tree which Murugan destroyed only after he had killed Cūraṉ (piṉṉum). Murugan came to know of the existence of a mango tree whose clusters of flowers were inclined downwards. It was a magical tree which deprived the enemies of the *avuṇar* of half their strength and added it to the might of the antigods. So Murugan cut down *that* tree with with his spear. Another commentator (anonymous *uraiyāciriyar*

says that Murugan has killed the chief of the *avuṇar* who had become the base of the mango tree (*mā-v-aṭi-v-ākiya*). However, he also says that the mango tree standing in the sea was a foreboding tree assisting the *avuṇar*. G. Subramania Pillai[1] sees in the motif of the mango tree a reflection of the ancient Tamil belief in the tutelary or sacred trees which were held by the kings as source of support and trees of oracle.

However, we believe, with Jean Filliozat (1973), in agreement with other Tamil texts, and with the accepted final version of the Kantapurāṇam, that Cūr and the mango tree were *one*; in other words, that Cūr, the embodiment of Terror, has taken the shape, has assumed the form of a huge mango tree in the midst of the sea. Parip. XVIII. 4 and Cilap. XIV. 6 clearly identify Cūr with the mango, and the inner logic and mythopoetic vision of the story demand— as we shall see—this interpretation.

By the time of the Paripāṭal (cca. 450-500 A.D.) the myth of Cūr was probably established in the shape as we know it. In Parip. V.4, Cevvēḷ-Murugan is said to hurl his *tīyaḻal* 'flame of fire' and cut the root (*mutal*) of the mango Cūr (or, the Mango-Chief Cūr) with his lance, in the sea (or near the sea). The same picture which we know from Tirumur. 56 appears here- even identical words are used, e.g. *paṉi-k-kaṭal*. The spear-*vēl*-of the god is depicted as sputtering fire; it cuts at the root of the mango which *is* Cūr, and the action of the god is thus radical; it destroys the antigod *as such* finally and totally. A different poet uses the same picture in Parip. IX. 70, employing almost the same words. The term *muḻumutal* is explained as *māviṉatu aṭimaram*. Parip. in XIV, 18 also mentions Murugan's blazing weapon (*cuṭarppaṭai*) which has destroyed the race of Cūr, and again, in XVIII. 1-4, it praises the *vēl* which destroyed the mango Cūr. This place gives us more details about the nature of the mango-tree: it stood in the deep sea and enveloped

everything. Finally, we reach the Cilappatikāram (450—550 A.D.) which, in VI. 49-51, mentions a dance called *tuṭi-* the dance of victory performed by Murugan using the ocean as stage, after he had destroyed Cūr and his *avuṇar.* Cilap.XXIV *teyvam parāyatu* 1.4 again extolls the weapon of the god with its shining blade which destroyed the Cūr-mango (*cūr mā taṭinta cuṭar ilaiya neṭu vēl*): observe again the stereotype, formulaic nature of the utterance.

From these references spread over approximately the first five centuries A.D. it is obvious that early Tamilnadu knew well and intimately a myth whose main elements may be formulated in the following utterance:

> God Cevvēḷ-Murugan destroyed Cūr, personified Fear, with his shining spear, by cutting asunder a huge mango tree—the form Cūr had assumed—growing out of the sea.

This then is the indigenous-autochthonous kernel of the great myth of Murugan and Cūr.

To sum up: Analogical with the notion of aṇaṅku but most frequently in contrast to it, the ancestors of the Tamils possessed a concept of impersonal Fear called *cūr*, inherent in certain places and objects. Soon it began to be viewed as a *persona*, an embodiment of Evil and of Angst, and as such, it—or rather he—became the chief enemy of the most potent Dravidian god, Murugu or Murugan, who was invoked to dispel or destroy it with his shining spear. When Murugan, thanks largely to the well-known feature of the coincidence of attributes, was identified with Skanda-Kumāra-Kārtikeya and thus a new composite deity, Subrahmaṇya, appeared in South India, Cūr was made one of the asuras, the chief among them and, absorbing the myth of the *tree* as *axis mundi* (the ax of the world) the demon Cūraṉ became Sūrapadma who waged war against gods and men and was destroyed by Subrahmaṇya-a kind of eternally recurring theme in Hindu mythology.

3.2. In its final, canonical and standard form as described in the 4th book of Kacciyappa Śivāccārya's Kantapurāṇam (very probably end of 14th Cent. A.D.), the struggle between Murugan and Cūr assumed the dimensions of a war on the model of the war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. Cūrapatmaṉ is the main enemy of Murugan in this magnificent *purāṇa*, but it is in fact the entire race of Cūr which must be annihilated because, apart from his brothers and his generals, Cūraṉ sends also his sons (Pāṉukōpāṉ, Agnimukha, Hiraṇya and Vajrabāhu) to the battle. To this multiplication of the *avuṇar* corresponds the multiplication of the hordes of Subrahmaṇya, especially the nine *vīraṉs*, chief among them generalissimo Vīrabāhu. On the 6th day, however, only one *asura* is killed-Cūrapatmaṉ himself. And, although in the enactment of the war in some temples, it is Tāraka again who is killed on the 6th day (e.g. at Muttiyālpēṭṭai), the ensemble of the festival is always termed Śūrasaṁhāra.

3.3. The Śūrasaṁhāra or the destruction of Cūrapatmaṉ according to Kantapurāṇa happens as follows: When Murugan slays his opponent's riding animal, the lion, Cūrapatmaṉ takes a series of different shapes in which he attacks the youthful god: first, the form of a huge bird which attacks Murugan's warriors beating them with its wings, and slashing Murugan's steeds with its beak. But the god commands Indra to take the form of a peacock, and, seated on this beautiful bird, he destroys the bird-form of the demon. Subsequently, Cūraṉ assumes the form of earth filling the entire space; but the god sends out seven arrows which change into seven seas that wash away the earth. The demon then changes into water spreading in flood throughout the universe; but Murugan, lord of all elements, discharges a hundred arrows which change into flames and absorb the waters. His enemy then changes into fire which is extinguished by a hurricane created by Murugan. Finally, Cūraṉ assumes the form of a terrible wind; but even that is subdued by Murugan's arrows. The youthful god then laughs and tells his enemy: "While I

—3—

appear before you in my true and eternal form, you have produced different fictions and assumed different perishable shapes. Why don't you take your own form?" Whereupon the Antigod assumes the form of a human-like giant, monstrous and terrifying: instead of eyes, he has the Sun and the Moon; his feet are the oceans, his legs mountains, his ears stars, in his hair he has the sages, in his palms the treasures of the earth, in his mouth the Veda, instead of teeth the letters, on his tongue the Āgamas, on his lips the mantras. Seeing this form, gods begin to tremble. And then he recites the magic formula which produces total darkness in which he rises to attack Murugan. But the god hurls his spear and the fiery trace of the lance dispells the tenebrous gloom, and Cūrapatma turns and runs. He jumps into the sea and changes into a huge mango tree which reaches up to the skies, and whose roots penetrate the earth. This is his last abode and his truest shape. But Murugan throws his spear. Listen now to the original verses which I attempted to translate (stanzas 490, 491, 492):

> When the spear tore the chest of the raging Cūr
> who endured, roaring but with dignity, in battle,
> armed with a red-rayed piercing sword,
> it split his body in two, and hurled the halves
> beyond the waves of the ocean,
> and the sea roared and the weapon
> shot high up into the skies.
>
> The gods sang their praises and showered a flowery rain;
> the lance left behind its body of fire,
> and in the form of Grace and Force
> it sank in the Gaṅgā, and then returned,
> to settle firm in the beautiful hand
> of the Lord of the Red Kaṭambu Tree
> who had removed the grief of the gods.
>
> The long war-spear returned; and the Foe-
> to his Lord's promise, and because of his boon-

could rise and rescue his trunk:
for its two torn and divided parts
a rooster and a peacock became;
and the Guardian of the army of gods
contrived further labours of war.

4. 1. What is the *meaning* of this magnificent myth? Several interpretations are possible. It is precisely this polyvalence of the Tamil mythopoetic vision which makes these great myths for ever alive. Thanks to savants such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Mircea Eliade we no longer regard Hindu myths as 'unconnected ramblings of phantasy run amuck', but as meaningful and significant structures, as 'grammars' of symbolic constructs and associations devised by the myth-makers to reflect, in their a-temporal or in-temporal mode of thinking, simultaneous and partial ***imagines mundi.***

4. 2. Cūr is, above all, the symbol of the most devastating, most destructive quality which man in his human condition must struggle against: of ANGST, of Fear, of the feeling of alienating terror (Angstgefühl), apprehensions and anxieties arising from the unknown around us, in the universe, and in our future. Against this paralyzing Fear, there stands Murugan, the ever youthful, the ever brave, with his shining spear of Knowledge which dispells anxiety and removes fears. Murugan the remover of Angst is the basic and fundamental and historically probably the prime message of the original Murugan myth. It again and again returns in later scriptures and iconography: it finds expression in the frequent gesture of ***abhaya*** (fearlessness) as well as in texts such as

añcu mukan tōṉṟiṉ āṟumukan tōṉṟum
veṇ camaril añcal eṉa vēl tōṉṟum...

4. 3. There is, however, a deeper and more complex symbolism involved. Cūr is the great symbol of chaos and disorder, of formless matter, of dangerous, wild, untamed, inimical nature. Observe that, in the final struggle,

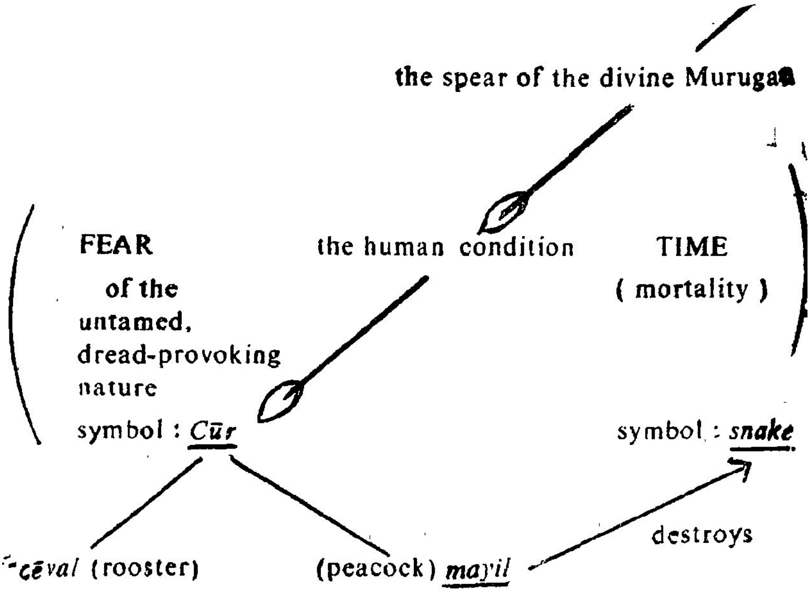
Cūrapatman assumes different forms and shapes of primal elements: earth, water, fire, wind. In the course of the struggle he attempts to destroy the god who symbolizes Cosmic Order and the taming of the elements. His attempts are unsuccessful because Murugan, using weapons of the same rank and level but always of opposite nature, overpowers him. It is significant, too, that the antigod each time takes up the weapon of Murugan to use it as his own weaponry since, being an anti-god, he is able only to imitate. Observe also the deep significance of the fact that while the demon's weapons are of shapeless, non-organized, disordered matter, Murugan's use of the same elemental weaponry is much more 'sophisticated' since he uses the 'elements' as well-formed, organized entities.

Cūrapatman's weapons	*Murugan's weapons*
earth	water of the seven seas
water	fiery flames
fire	hurricane wind
wind	serpents

Thus, the war between Cūr and Murugan represents the struggle between untamed, wild, threatening nature and culture. Nature cannot be totally destroyed, only subdued. Hence Cūr is not totally annihilated but transformed into the peacock and the rooster both of which serve the god, one as his vehicle another as his banner.

Thus the *nature*: *culture* opposition is resolved in this myth by Murugan's taming of nature and making it subservient.

Schematically, the main 'drama' of Murugan's myth-he overcoming of some basic contradictions of the human condition-may be symbolized as follows:



Commentary: From the destruction of Fear which was embodied in the Cūr in the mango, and so to say out of it, the two birds are born: the peacock, a symbol of joy in its dance when the rains-life-giving, fertile rains-come; the 'riding' of the peacock symbolizes the taming of nature. The peacock, too, destroys the other basic enemy of man-Time, Kālaṉ, i.e. Death (symbol:snake, overpowered in the claws of the god's peacock- incidentally, the 'national' bird of India). The second bird originating from the destroyed Cūr is the rooster, the herald of dawn, the symbol of generation, of procreation, the dispeller of darkness, and it becomes Murugan's banner.

4. 4. Why has Murugan destroyed the mango? Why, in the first place, has Cūr taken the shape of a monstrous, huge mango tree?

The answer should possibly be sought in a whole group of myths which operate with the concept of the pivotal, central core of the world, an imaginary line about which the whole world rotates. This is known as the *axis mundi*. Often the

symbol of this world-axis is a mountain (Mount Meru, or the limitless mountain in the Nāgaloka), often it is a tree. Cūr's tree, however, becomes a menace; it grows out of the waters of the primeval ocean-i.e. out of the waters of the primordial chaos-up to the skies, and it fills the entire space, it, so to say, blocks the entire space. The god acts to restore the cosmic order. He throws his spear which dries the waters of the sea as it flies towards the mango, and the destruction of the mango creates a new space for the world, liberates the Sun from the darkness of chaos, but, above all, liberates Cūr himself!

Why does Murugan throw his spear? As David Shulman has shown, the image of throwing a spear at the sea is richly connected with other myths, local and not so local, as e. g. with Paraśurāma's throwing his axe at the ocean, or with Ugrapāṇḍya's throwing his lance against the sea[2]. This motif of throwing a weapon at the sea is, to use Shulman's description, part of a "creative attack upon the ocean". In casting his spear, Murugan overcomes the forces of evil, of disorder, of uncontrolled violence.

But, as mentioned above, Cūr as such is destroyed and yet *not* completely annihilated. At the moment of his death he is divided and 'reborn' as a cock and a peafowl. Why? One reason was already given above: Because, as a symbol of untamed nature he cannot and must not be completely wiped out, only transformed, tamed, civilized. There is, however, it seems to me, yet another reason or two. First, the *rākṣasas* of the Rāmāyaṇa survive the war with Rāma, too, they are not all of them slaughtered; some of them are transformed, 'reformed' under the righteous rule of king Vibhīṣaṇa. Second, the violent force of the demon is channeled into creative, beneficial, necessary, positive roles which Murugan's peafowl and his cock play hence. To achieve this, the sacrifice-i.e. the killing of Cūr-must be performed but only so that the victim is not totally annihilated. May we see in this motif the idea of the *vastu*, the remnant-germ of the old sacrifice?

I am well aware of the fact that the myth of Murugan and Cūr which I believe is basically an autochthonous, i. e. a Tamil, Dravidian myth , has very probably yet other levels of meaning, and is capable of yet different interpretations. But therein, as stressed above, lies precisely its greatness and its everlasting vitality.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Tree Worship and Ophiolatry*, Annamalainagar, 1948.

2. *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal.* of *Tiruvālavāyuṭaiyār* 21. 1-9 ; *MhBh* 3.214.31; also *Skandap*. 6. 68. 6-16 and *MhBh* 3. 116. 29.

MURUGAN AND VAḶḶI

1. The story of Murugan's courtship and his union with the daughter of the hunters, Vaḷḷi, is the most important of all Tamil myths of the *second marriage of a god.* In the Sanskrit tradition, Skanda is either an eternal brahmacārin (bachelor) or the husband of a rather colourless deity, Devasenā, the Army of the gods. In Tamil, in cotrast, the earliest reference to a bride of Murugan is to Vaḷḷi and there can be no doubt whatsoever that Vaḷḷi is the more popular and more important of Murugan's two brides. Hence, I do regard the lovely myth of Murugan and Vaḷḷi as an indigenous—autochthonous myth, a Dravidian myth; it also contains some of the oldest indigenous fragments of myth to survive, and some of the most ancient conceptual and ideological apparatus of the Tamils.

2. The standard version, considered by Tamil devotees of Murugan as canonical and definitive (although not the only one current!), is found as the very last (24th) canto of the sixth book of Kacciyappa's Kantapurāṇam (composed around 1350 A.D. in Kāñcipuram); entitled Vaḷḷiyammai tirumaṇa-ppaṭalam, it has 267 stanzas. Here is its brief summary:

There is a mountain called Vaḷḷimalai or Vaḷḷiveṟpu, not far from the village of Mēṟpāṭi, in the Toṇṭaināṭu country. In a village beneath the hill lived a hunter called Nampi; all his children being boys, he longed for a little girl. On the mountain slope, an ascetic by name of Śivamuni was engaged in austerities. One day a gazelle went by, and the ascetic was aroused by its lovely shape; his lascivious thoughts made the gazelle pregnant. The daughter of Māl incarnated in the

embryo. In due time, the gazelle gave birth to a girl in a pit dug out by the women of the hunter-tribe when they searched for the tubers of edible yam (*vaḷḷi*). The female deer, having found out that she had given birth to a strange being, abandoned the child which was discovered by the hunter-chief Nampi and his wife. Overwhelmed with joy, they took the little girl to their hut and named her Vaḷḷi.

When Vaḷḷi reached the age of twelve, she was sent to the millet field - in agreement with the custom of the hillmen - to guard the crops against parrots and other birds, sitting in an elevated platform called *itaṇam* (*paraṇ*), and chasing the birds and other beasts away. The sage Nārada, who visited Vaḷḷimalai and saw the girl, went to Taṇikai to inform god Murugan about Vaḷḷi's exceptional beauty and her devotion to the god of the hunters. Murugan assumed the form of a hunter and, as soon as he arrived at Vaḷḷi's field, he addressed the lovely girl enquiring after her home and family. However, at that moment Nampi and his hunters brought some food for Vaḷḷi (honey, millet flour, *vaḷḷi* roots, mangoes, milk of the wild cow) and Murugan assumed the form of a tree (*vēṅkai, Pterocarpus bilobus*).

When Nampi and his company disappeared, the god reappeared in human form, approached Vaḷḷi and told her that he would like to love her. Vaḷḷi was shocked, lowered her head, and answered that it was improper for him to love a woman from the low tribe of the hunters. At that moment, they heard the sound of approaching drumming and music. Vaḷḷi warned Murugan that the hunters are wild and angry men, and the god transformed into an old Śaiva devotee. Nampi and his hunters took his blessings and returned home.

The old man asked Vaḷḷi for food, and she gave him some millet flour mixed with honey. Then she took him to a small forest pond, where she quenched his thirst from the palms of her hands. Then he told her; "Now that you have satisfied

my hunger and my thirst, do satisfy my love for you." Vaḷḷi reproached him, and wanted ty return to her field.

At that moment, Murugan invoked the help of his brother Vināyaka who appeared behind Vaḷḷi in the shape of a frightening elephant. The terror-stricken girl rushed into the arms of the Śaiva ascetic for protection; he dragged her into a thicket and, while embracing her, revealed his real form, with six heads, twelve arms, and seated on his peacock. Carried away by this vision of her favourite god, Vaḷḷi worshipped him and he told her that she was, in fact, the daughter of Tirumāl. Vaḷḷi complied with hiswish, and they loved each other.

A female companion of Vaḷḷi questioned the girl about her absence and the striking change in her appearance, but Vaḷḷi answered evasively. Soon after that, Murugan, again in the shape of a hunter, appeared in front of the two girls, and the companion observed that Vaḷḷi and the hunter exchanged amorous looks. Therefore, she demanded that the hunter remove himself. He then admitted his love for Vaḷḷi and warned the companion that, if she would not help them to meet and enjoy their love, he would resort to the old custom of *maṭal* or riding the toy-horse in the village itself. The companion agreed to Murugan's request.

As the harvesting time approached, the tribesmen called Vaḷḷi back to the hamlet, and the love-making was over. With a heavy heart, she returned to the house of Nampi. Her clandestine love affair (*kaḷavu*) with the god ended. Her mother noticed Vaḷḷi's unhappiness and invited soothsaying women who stated that Vaḷḷi was possessed by the *cūr* of the slopes and that a ceremony in honour of god Murugan should be organised.

Murugan went to the millet field and, not finding Vaḷḷi there, he came, at midnight, to the hamlet, and with the aid of her companion, Vaḷḷi and her divine lover eloped.

Next morning Nambi's wife discovered Vaḷḷi's disappearance. The furious hunter-chief organised a party of hillmen in pursuit of the fugitives. When they reached them, they discharged their arrows at Murugan, but the divine cock of the god crowed and the hunters fell dead. Vaḷḷi lamented their death, but Murugan took her along. On their way they met Nārada who explained to Murugan that he should have obtained the consent of the parents. The god therefore returned and ordered Vaḷḷi to resuscitate the hunters which she gladly did. Murugan then assumed his true divine shape. Amazed and awed, the hunters worshipped him and begged him to return to the hamlet to be married in accordance with the custom of the tribe.

The whole village rejoiced. The young pair was seated on a tiger-skin. Nampi placed the hand of Vaḷḷi into the hand of Murugan and declared them married while Nārada assisted. At that moment, the gods appeared in the air and blessed everyone. Nampi then offered a feast— plenty of honey, millet flour, and jungle fruits. After a short stay at Ceruttaṇi (Tiruttaṇi), Murugan and Vaḷḷi returned to Skandagiri, where they were welcomed by Devasenā.

What is so very thrilling in this story is the fact that almost step by step its structural slots and their fillers are derived from elements of the oldest Tamil tradition. It is the classical Sangam age all over: the heroine born among the hillmen; at the age of twelve, sent to guard the millet field sitting in the *paraṉ*; the appearance of the god—i.e. the *talaivaṉ*, the hero, and his attempts at immediate, clandestine love-making (*kaḷavu*); the role of the *tōḻi*—the companion of the heroine; the motif of riding the *maṭal*-horse; the *kāmanōy*-love sickness of Vaḷḷi due to separation; the soothsaying women, and the *veṟi* dance of the *vēlaṉ*, arranged to appease Murugan and dispell *cūr*; the motif of elopment of lovers. It is quite obvious that this story is purely and totally Tamil.

3. I share fully the view that religious phenomena can be best understood on their own plane of reference, that they deserve to be interpreted in religious terms, and that the most fruitful approach to the study of a deity and its myths should be phenomenological and structural: an attempt to apprehend a vision of reality that persists throughout the history of a deity. However, any religious phenomenon is also a psychological, social, and historical phenomenon. A historical-evolutionary study, even a historical-evolutionary interpretation of a deity and its myths is necessary, too, atleast at some preliminary stage of its investigation.

3.1. First then, the *name* of Vaḷḷi. The Tamil etymology is a simple and straightforward Dravidian derivation. According to an ancient and persistant tradition, the name of the person is derived from the name of the plant, *vaḷḷi*, DED 4351, found in Ta. Ma. Ka. Koḍ. Tu. and Te. and a number of tribal languages. The creeper belongs to the *Dioscoreaceae* it has a 'winged' stem, and both wild and cultivated varieties; the cultivated varieties have edible bulbous roots. It is mentioned in the glossary of the 99 plants typical for the *kuṟiñci* region found in Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu ascribed to Kapilar (ca. 140-200 A.D.). In the earliest Tamil texts, the term *vaḷḷi* in its meaning of this creeping plant occurs at least 18 times. The Skt. *valli-*, also vaḷḷi 'creeper, creeping plant' is almost without doubt derived from Dravidian, since the Skt. term occurs relatively late, has no plausible Aryan etymology, and refers to a plant typical for tropical India. In Dravidian, the item is found in relatively 'distant' languages like Tamil and Telugu, and in early records, referring to a plant used almost certainly in prehistorical tropical forest cultivation. According to the myth, Vaḷḷi the person was so called because she was found in a pit dug out while gathering the edible tubers of the *vaḷḷi*-plant. *Vaḷḷi* as a plant is mentioned in Akam 52.1 and 286.2, Puṟam 316.9, Naṟ. 269.7 and Parip. 21.10. The roots (*kiḻaṅku*) of *vaḷḷi* are mentioned explicitely in Puṟ. 109.6 and Kal.39.12, In Aiṅkuṟ. 250 a vague but probably

significant connection is mentioned between the worship of Murugan and the *vaḷḷi*-plant.

The earliest references to Vaḷḷi the *person,* the beloved and consort of Murugan, are relatively few, though increasingly important. In their probable time sequence they are found in Naṟ. 82.4, Tirumuruk. 102, Parip. 8.69, 9.8, 9.67, 14.22 and Cilap. 24.3. Thus we have all in all only ***seven*** relatively *early* (i.e. pre-*bhakti,* pre-sixth Cent. A.D., pre-Pallava) references to Vaḷḷi as the god's beloved and or spouse. One of these references belongs to the earliest strata of Tamil texts: Naṟṟiṇai 82.4. The poem belongs to the *kuṟiñci* sub-type of *akam* poetry and may be dated to the 2nd-3rd Cent. A.D. It says: *nīyē/eṉṉuḷ varutiyō nalnaṭaik koṭicci/ murukupuṇarntu iyaṉṟa vaḷḷi pōla* "Oh you, girl of the mountain tribe whose gait is beautiful, will you come to me like Vaḷḷi who had gladly agreed to join Muruku?" The erotic association is clear: the hero invites the girl to join him as his sweetheart. The Tamil term *punar* in *murukupuṇarntu vaḷḷi* means to 'unite, particularly sexually, to cohabit'. It is therefore clear that in the 2nd or 3rd Cent. A.D. the story of Vaḷḷi and Murugan-i.e. the nucleus of the myth narrated above in the sense of Vaḷḷi being the beloved and sexual partner of Murugan-was sufficiently well-known to provide a divine model for human behaviour, and a material for the poet to draw a simile from. It is worth-while noticing that at the time when this story was obviously well-known in Tamil India, and hence must have been known there even before the 2nd. Cent., nothing at all is heard yet of a Vaḷḷi in any Sanskrit or North Indian source.

The Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai is a text qualitatively different from almost all other so called Sangam poetic texts, not in that it would be much later in time but that it is different in character and purpose. Unlike the other bardic poems, it is a religious text par excellence, a text devoted (for the first time in the development of Tamil textual tradition) exclusively

to the worship of a deity-Murugan. From the point of view of its attitude towards the process broadly termed Sanskritization Tirum. is certainly integrative and syncretistic. The god's consort Vaḷḷi is mentioned once as the 'innocent daughter of the mountain-tribe with creeper-like waist, at whom one of the six faces of Murugan smiles in serenity. Tirum. is also probably the earliest Tamil text which, in agreement with its syncretistic-integrative tendency, mentions for the first time, the northern, imported, consort of Skanda-Murugan— if not by name than at least by allusion. The term *kaṟpu* in line 6 of the poem (Skt. *kalpaa?*) by which Devasenā is alluded to means 'fundamental duty, rule, chastity'. It refers to a form of marriage which is according to the rules of the Brahminic order; and indeed, Devasenā alias Tēvayāṉai has become the symbol of the regular Hindu marriage performed according to Brahminic Hindu rites while Vaḷḷi, as is clear mainly from the Paripāṭal obviously was considered the symbol of *kaḷavu*, love-relationship based on *kātal* 'lov-eaffection', and of marriage performed according to pre-Aryan, non-Brahminic rites. In fact—and this is the first importan- conclusion of this talk-Murugan and Vaḷḷi are *mythic exempt lars* of the ancient and indigenous Tamil motif of *kaḷavu*— the pre-marital union of lovers.

It is a significant fact that nothing is heard of Devasenā-Tēvayāṉai before Nakkīrar, a member of the Sanskritized. Tamil clergy and a devotee of Murugan (ca. 190-260 A.D. ?), following his tendency to integrate the myths of Skanda. Kumāra with the myths of Murugan, has introduced her as the consort of the god in the very beginning of the poem. Vice versa, nothing is heard of Vaḷḷi in the pre-*purāṇic* periods of Sanskrit texts, while Devasenā is richly documented even from epic mythology. In Sanskrit epic mythology Devasenā, sister of Daityasenā, is the only consort of Skanda. A daughter of Prajāpati, she was ravished by the demon Keśin. In deference of Devasenā Indra wounded Keśin. Her mother was the sister of Indra's mother, a daughter of Dakṣa. Indra

sought a husband for Devasenā and, when Skanda was born and had conquered the world in six days, presented her to the youthful god. Bṛhaspati married them and she is his queen. Hence Skanda is known as Devasenāpati and Devasenāpriya. Her name means 'host of celestials' or 'army of the gods'. The relationship Devasenā-Vaḷḷi is part of a much larger complex of problems and will be partly discussed later.

3.2. Very important features pertaining to the Vaḷḷi-Murugan relationship, and to the person of Vaḷḷi herself, appear in Paripāṭal (ca. 350-400 A.D.) and Cilapatikāram (ca. 450-500 A.D.). In fact, it is only in these later Old Tamil texts that we are informed at least in some detail of the main characteristics of Vaḷḷi and of some characteristics of Tēvayāṉai. The story of Murugan and Vaḷḷi which the poets of Parip. must have known very well has a few specific features in the poems of this text, and Vaḷḷi herself plays a most important role in a very specific context of Murugan as the god of love. Of course, the integrative tendency of Nakkīrar developed in the poems of Parip. and Murugan is already married to Devasenā. Since the tradition situates the wedding of the god with Indra's daughter at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam after the victorious war against Cūr at Tiruccentūr, Parip. makes the same place the site of the god's marriage with Vaḷḷi. But the most interesting context appears in Parip. 9, namely the competition and the quarrel between the two wives of Murugan-the celestial, Aryan, 'regular consort' Devasenā, and the terrestrial, Dravidian sweetheart Vaḷḷi. The conflict results in heroic-comical battle, won by Vaḷḷi and her bravado-filled mountaineers.

This conflict between Devasenā and Vaḷḷi left its traces in subsequent development in the Tamil folk tradition, and may have been, in fact, the reflection of something much deeper, as we shall see later. Whatever the 'original' level of this conflict of the two wives was, whatever was its 'real', concrete basis, in post-Paripāṭal and subsequent developments, up to

the present time, the conflict between Vaḷḷi and Devasenā, who *do* indeed represent two *different* cultures, *may* be interpreted as a symbol of the conflict between the local, pre-Aryan tradition, and the imported, Sanskritic tradition. No doubt such *is* the case in Parip. In this text, if not in the later folklore versions, it is more thaua reflection of a real-life conflict between an older and a younger wife of a man (*cakkaḷatti caṇṭai*). In the 9th canto of Parip., the ancient Tamil tradition of affectionate love (*kātal*) is contrasted with simple physical passion (*kāmam* < Skt. *kama-*). That which is beautiful in *kamam* is the passion determined by *kātal* (Parip. 9.14). And this, as expressed explicitely, refers to the *kaḷavu* love relationship as opposed to *kaṟpu*; *kaṟpu* is characterized, in Parip. 9.16, in not very flattering terms. The text of the Parip. stresses that the view which has been expressed concerning the excellence of *kalavu* is the *Tamil* view (line 25), and only those who adopt it, will profit from the fruit (*payaṉ*) of the mountain of Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, that is, will profit from the benefit bestowed by Murugan's and Vaḷḷi's grace.

In the conflict that arose between Vaḷḷi and Teyvayāṉai at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam Vaḷḷi stands-as stressed-for *kaḷavu*—and Devasenā for *kaṟpu* (Parip. 9.12 and elsewhere). When the 'army' of Devasenā loses the battle against Vaḷḷi, Devasenā's confused companions change into bees, peacocks and cuckoos, to vanish in the forests of the hill. Vaḷḷi is thus the preferred and the triumphant wife *because* she represents 'true' love (*kātal*). I cannot but quote F. Gros[2] with whom I entirely agree in this matter: "Ultérieurement, le triomphe de Vaḷḷi sera attribué au triomphe de l'amour, pour donner au vrai dévot l' image de sa bhakti, et, des deux épouses, Vaḷḷi sera toujours représentée sur les images à la droite du dieu."

3.3. In the great epic of old Tamil literature, *Cilappatikāram* (ca. 450 A.D.), an allusion to Vaḷḷi occurs in the first canto of the third book (24.6) when the tragic heroine of the

poem, Kaṇṇaki is compared to Vaḷḷi. In the same canto entitled Kuṉṟakkuravai, 'The Dance of the Mountain Women', Vaḷḷi figures prominently in the songs about Murugan, in particular in a song which is a prayer of the girls of the mountain tribe. The song is very important: First, it is very significant that the girls of the mountain tribe pray *to* Vaḷḷi worshipping her holy feet (*tiruvaṭi toḻutēm*); second, that they pray in a matter of love, in order to obtain a blessed love-union with the beloved man, instead of a marriage with a stranger. In other words, the Kuṟava women pray for the preservation and continuation of the traditional Tamil pattern of love-making: marriage with the 'hero', i.e. first *kaḷavu* then *kaṟpu*. Vaḷḷi is thus again affirmed as ***the*** patroness of that traditional, non-Brahminic, Tamil love affair. Even more important is the following prayer to Murugan. In it, his mother (Malaimakaḷ), the god himself and Vaḷḷi are invoked, and again, in the last stanza of the prayer, it is stated beyond doubt that she is a Kuṟa girl, the "daughter of our tribe" (*kuṟamakaḷ aval ema kulamakal avaḷ*). This social identification of Vaḷḷi with her community, so forcefully stressed, is important. The prayer is directed to both the god and his consort:

> We worship your two feet, O six-faced god, ***with*** her who is the daughter of our tribe, who is a Kuṟa girl.

However, it is important that in the prayer, it is Vaḷḷi who is first worshipped; then the god himself; then both; and, of course, the purpose of the worship is a good marriage (*naṉmaṇam*) with the one who had promised to marry, his hand upon the holy feet of Murugan's image. Vaḷḷi and Murugan thus appear in this early epic composed some time between the 5th-7th Cent. A.D. probably on the West coast of South India as the patrons of true love and the deities of marriage.

4. In subsequent, post-Kantapurāṇam development, the story of Vaḷḷi and Murugan changed in the Great Tamil

Tradition only little: the *structure of the plot* remained remarkably identical with the KP version. Additional features were added, some names were slightly changed. I discussed these additions and alternations in one of my recent papers[8]. Now I would rather like to offer a few interpretative insights.

First, as we have seen, the Vaḷḷi-Murugan myth is replete with ancient indigenous elements: the clandestine, premarital union of lovers (*kaḷavu*); the cast of characters—the heroine (*talaivi*=Vaḷḷi) who drives away birds from millet fields; her companion (*tōḻi*) who helps the lovers to elope; her foster-mother; the hunter with the spear who becomes the lover of Vaḷḷi (*talaivan*); Murugan's threat to ride the *maṭal* toy-horse; the typical *kuṟiñci* attributes (honey, millet, hill-ponds, the elephant, *ciṟṟūr* - small hamlet, etc.); the attempt to exorcise *cūr* that is supposed to possess the girl; the elopement in the night. In other words: The myth has preserved in plenty ancient AKAM conventions. It is the *kaḷavu* union that is the conventional focus of the *Vaḷḷi* myth: Vaḷḷi is thus the indigenous bride of the god; she epitomizes obviously the idea of a local, Tamil bride of a syncretistic, complex deity, as opposed to the "imported" first wife. Vaḷḷi symbolizes the local, indigenous-autochthonous tradition.

Second, in its finished form and resulting function, the myth of Vaḷḷi is a myth of BHAKTI: Murugan in his pursuit of Vaḷḷi is God in pursuit of the soul. Vaḷḷi represents the immediate, spontaneous, ecstatic union of the soul with the divine. On *this* level of *bhakti*, the *kaḷavu* union, with all its dangers and conflicts, symbolizes that state of disorder and unlimited power in which man most directly experiences the divine.

Third: The rivalry between Vaḷḷi and Teyvayāṉai. This rivalry is part of the popular tradition of *ēcal* "abuse"-the mutual denunciation and exchange of insults between two wives of a man. The application of the *ēcal* theme to the two wives of Murugan appears for the first time—as

mentioned before—in the Paripāṭal where the rain over Paraṅkuṉṟam is compared to the tears shed by Teyvayāṉai on the day that Murugan secretely married Vaḷḷi. This theme, especially its coarse aspects, was richly developed in the popular compositions, in oral tradition, in folk drama. However, it was suggested that the relationship Devasenā-Vaḷḷi was part of a much larger complex of questions connected with the development of Murugan into the complex god known as Skanda-Kumāra-Kārtikeya-Murugan and by a host of other names.

One possible interpretation of Vaḷḷi and Murugan who both reach to the prehistoric period of South India, is the neolithic proto-hunter, "the model-hunter" Murugan mating with Vaḷḷi, the daughter of the late neolithic agriculturalists cultivating fields of millets and edible tubers in South Indian hills. It was not Skanda alone who was superimposed on and who merged with Murugan; it was the divine pair Skanda-Kārtikeya+Devaseṉā who were superimposed on and merged with another divine pair, Murugan+Vaḷḷi. In no way could Vaḷḷi merge with Devaseṉā, because there was no valid and outstanding coincidence of attributes between the two, and because the structure of her relationship with Murugan was quite different from the structure of the relationship of Skanda and Devasenā. Compromise and adaptation in the Vaḷḷi-Murugan myth were the result: the Aryan tradition accepted the story of Murugan's and Vaḷḷi's courtship (probably with great reluctance[4]) but Murugan had to marry Vaḷḷi according to Brahminic rites in an additional ceremony, and, finally, both women were made the daughters of Viṣṇu.

By marrying both Devasenā and Vaḷḷi, the following contradictions, contrasts and oppositions have been overcome in the Skanda-Murugan myth:

Viṣṇu

via Indra	via the Southern hunters
"Heaven"	"Earth"
Devasenā	Vaḷḷi
Transcendence	Immancnce
Active	Contemplative
KriyāŚakti	Icchāśakti
Kaṟpu	Kaḷavu
Imported	Indigenous
Brahminic-Sanskritic	Dravidian-Tamil

daughters of Viṣṇu + son of Śiva
integration of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava

The final merger resulted in a complex triad since a great load of economic, social and cultural relationships was covered and many a contrast has been overbridged.

5. In conclusion, one should stress the fact that Murugan's marriage to Vaḷḷi fits precisely into a pan-South Indian pattern of the double marriage of a god. I would even go as far as to say that in all probability Murugan's two wives provide the archetype of this pattern which developed after the merger of local indigenous-autochthonous Dravidian, South Indian deities with the Northern, Brahminic gods. In any case, the myth of the courtship of and marriage with Vaḷḷi is the most important of all Tamil myths of the double marriage.

This concept is widely applied both to the Purāṇic deities of the "great", normative South Indian Hindu tradition, and to the folk gods of the Tamil area. Thus Vēṅkaṭēśvara has two wives: besides the fair, 'northern' consort, Sītā, he marries Padmāvatī, the dark, local goddess who is the 'shadow' Sītā born from the earth; thus Kṛṣṇa's first wife is the golden Rukmaṇī, his second the dark Satyabhāmā; Siva's first wife is the golden Gaurī, his second wife the dark Kālī

even Gaṇēśa has two brides, Siddhi, and Buddhi; Aiyaṉār, too, has two wives, Pūraṇā and Puṣkalā or Madanā and Varṇanī; and so have a number of folk deities like Maturaivīraṉ. Observe that the structural pattern is entirely *predictable*: the second wife is dark (black, dark blue, dark green, clad usually in dark red attire), a local bride born from the Tamil land, a daughter of the soil, of lower social standing than her rival the first consort. But it is the second bride who stands on the right side of the god; who is close to the people, who attracts not only the interest and affection of her divine husband but also of the worshippers. In the case of Vaḷḷi, it is she who is "our Mother", it is through her that we penetrate to the god. I shall return to this deeply basic pattern in my last talk.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Vanaparvan* 222. Cf. E.W. Hopkins, ***Epic Mythology***, ed. 1968, p.229.
2. F. Gros, ***Le Paripāṭal***, p. XLVII.
3. Cf. my paper 'Vaḷḷi and Murugan—a Dravidian Myth', *Indo-Iranian Journal* 19 (1977) 227—246. There are of course, obviously, other traditions pertaining to the Vaḷḷi—Murugan myth—other, that is, than the high Tamil literary tradition. There are almost innumerable folk traditions, apart from the Ceylonese Kataragama tradition. All these must form the subject of a separate investigation.
4. The reluctance of the 'Vedic' Aryans to accept the *kaḷavu* love relationship and Vaḷḷi as its representant is obvious from Paripāṭal's attitude, which is very much 'pro-Tamil' and which mentions this reluctance. Also, observe the fact that the story of Vaḷḷi and Murugan appears in all versions of the complex 'biography' of Murugan only as their last part, as something of an 'addition'.

SKANDAPURĀṆA AND KANTAPURĀṆAM

1. The Tamil standard, canonical, authoritative text of the myths of Murugan is the Kantapurāṇam of Kacciyappa-civācāriyar in 10,345 stanzas, composed—as we shall see—very probably round the year 1400 in Kāñcipuram. There are three main problems around this complex, admirable and supremely important work :

a. The person of its author, Kacciyappa Civācārya of Kāñcipuram's Kumarakōṭṭam, and of his authorship.

b. The dating of Kacciyappa and his work.

c. The relationship of the Tamil work to the Sanskrit versions of the story.

Let me at once say that *none* of these problems have so far been satisfactorily solved, and that they have hardly been discussed at all critically and in detail.

2. Kacciyappa's work which consists of 10.340 (or 10.345/6) four-line *viruttam* stanzas in 6 *kāṇṭam's* (books) in 141 chapters, also contains a seventh book, Upatēcakāṇṭam, in two versions: one by Ñāṉavarōtayar (2602 stanzas in 85 chapters, ca. 1425 A.D., ed. 1950), another by Koṉēriyappar (4348 stanzas, ca. 1450 A.D., eds. 1913, 1887). Thus some editions of the Tamil Kantapurāṇam contain 15.345 stanzas in total.

3. The *purāṇa* begins with a lengthy preamble (*pāyiram*) of 352 stanzas: first, Vikṛtacakra (Vikaṭacakkara) Vīnāyaka (Gaṇapati) of Kāñci is praised, followed by Cevvēḷ, Śiva, Śakti, Vairavaṉ, Vīrabhadra, Nandi, the Tamil sages Ñāṉacampantar, Appar, Cuntarar and Māṇikkavācakar, other Śaiva devotees, and Sarasvatī. Next, Kacciyappa des-

cribes the origin of his poem; the subsequent parts of the introduction describe the river Pāliyāṟu, the country of Toṇṭaināṭu, the city of Kāñci with the shrine of Kumarakōṭṭam, and the history of the *purāṇam* is also given. Thus, the KP is primarily a *sthalapurāṇa* for it celebrates Kāñcipuram and in particular the god of the Kumarakōṭṭam temple (where Kacciyappa is said to have lived as a Sivācārya priest), and it gives us in effect the myths of Murugan in the form current in the Toṇṭai region round 1400 A.D. I shall in some detail later discuss that part of the Introduction in which Kacciyappa, in first person, reveals to us the motifs for his composition and the method how he Tamilized the Sanskritic story by using indigenous-autochthonous material of Tamil Murugan lore.

4. The book has the following parts:

1. Uṟpattikāṇṭam 'The Book of Creation' = the origin of Murugan; in 26 chapters.

2. Avuṇarkāṇṭam 'The Book of Asuras' = the original history of the Asuras, in 43 chapters, the longest part of the work.

3. Makēntirakāṇṭam 'The Book of Mahendram' = about the grand city of the Asuras and their war-lord. 21 chapters.
4. Pōrkkāṇṭam 'The Book of War' = in a way the climax of the epic, the description of the war of Murugan and his minions against Cūrapatumaṉ and his hordes. In 16 chapterst
5. Tēvakāṇṭam 'The book of the devas' = the shortest part of the *purāṇa*, in 5 chapters.

6. Takkakāṇṭam 'The Book of Dakṣa'. In 24 chapters, containing the Vaḷḷi myth as its 24th chapter.

5. The person of the author

5.1. The sources on Kacciyappa's life are very meagre. Firs. there is of course the text of the KP itself—whatever the author has to say about himself; as autobiography goes, it is

precious little. He throws some light which is interesting on the motifs and procedures why and how he has composed his poem, but about his own person he says practically nothing.

Second there is a short biographical work in verse called Kacciyappa Civācāriyar Purāṇam composed by Vāmatēva Muruka Paṭṭārakar at the end of the 19th Cent. in 173 stanzas (publ. 1917).

Third, in the Toṇṭaimaṇṭalacatakam (late 17th—early 18th Cent. A.D., by Paṭikkācuppulavar), Kacciyappa is mentioned in a stanza which says that he has composed the 16 thousand stanzas of KP and was brought into the presence of the Lord for the *araṅkēṟṟam* in a palanquin donated by the inhabitants of the 24 *kōṭṭams* or districts of Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam.

Fourth, there lived a poet by name of Campanta Caraṇālaya Muṉivar (a tampirāṉ from Dharmapura ādhīnam) in the 17th Cent. who went to Maisūr and there on the request of the rāja abridged Kacciyappa's poem into a work of 1048 stanzas, called Kantapurāṇaccurukkam.

These two facts provide a more of less safe *terminus ad quem* for Kacciyapa's date. He could not have been later than the 17th Cent. As we shall see, the date put forward by Nilakanta Sastri, viz. 1625 A.D., is acceptable but highly improbable; I am convinced it is too late. Back to our poet.

There is the complex of only partly recorded oral traditions of which I could personally gather some from Kacciyappa's direct descendant still living in Kāñcipuram and performing as Śivācārya in the Kumarakōṭṭam temple. I made my recordings in 1978. On this slender and unverifiable evidence, one may reconstruct Kacciyappa's story as follows:

A pious Brahmin of the Śivācārya community, Kāḷattiyappa, lived in Kāñcipuram as an *arcaka* of the Kumarakōṭṭam shrine. For a long time childless, he was blessed finally with a boy, who followed his father in the traditional profession. One day, Lord Muruga appeared to Kacciyappa

in a dream and asked him to compose a Tamil poem under the name Kantapurāṇam, and even gave him its initial verse: *Tikaṭacakkarac cemmukam aintuḷān* "He who has ten resplendent arms and five beautiful faces" (i.e. Śiva). Under divine inspiration, Kacciyappa composed daily 100 stanzas, and placed every evening the palm-leaves at the feet of Murugan's image in the temple.

Every morning he found his maunscript corrected. Lord Subrahmaṇya corrected during the nights what Kacciyappa composed during the days. The poem finished, Kacciyappa took it for its premiére reading to the assembly of priests and poets. However, as soon as he uttered the first line, there arose an uproar of protest, since the *sandhi* employed, i. e. *tikaḷ taca*>*tikaṭaca* ... was considered faulty and unheard of Next night, the Lord again appeared in the dream of the unhappy poet and revealed to him that the rule in question exists in the grammar Vīracōḷiyam, in the part on *sandhi* as rule no. 18. The following day Murugan appeared in disguise in the assembly and forced the scholars to accept the new *sandhi* rule, and with it the poem. They recognized its excellence, it spread far and wide, and brought fame to its author.

The *sandhi* rule in question, concerning the ***Auslaut*** of a Tamil item ending in - *ḷ* + the ***Anlaut*** of a Sanskrit loanword. beginning with *t* - is indeed given only in the medieval grammar Vīracōḷiyam: we do not find such usage or such rule earlier; in a way, it gives us therefore a lower limit: Kantapurāṇam can hardly be earlier than A. D. 1070.

6. Dating

6.1. The most widely differing dates have been suggested for the Tamil Kantapurāṇam, ranging from the 8th to the 17th or even 18th Cent. A. D. As with so many cases in Tamil literature, the dating of Kacciyappa depends on imprecise allusions in external sources, and upon circumstantial evidence. Two things are clear to any student of the *purāṇa*, though. First, it is *obvious* that Kacciyappa took Kamban's Irāmāvatā-

ram as his structural and literary model. Second, it is clear that he was familiar with the concepts and the terminology of Śaiva Siddhānta to the minutest detail as formulated by Umāpati in the *first half of the* 14*th Cent*. Let us now attempt to narrow down the date of Kacciyappar by a brief examination of both external and internal evidence.

6.2. Kacciyappa was undoubtedly mentioned by three poets in the 17th cent.: by Antakakkavi Vīrarākava Mutaliyār in Cēyūr Murukaṉ Piḷḷait Tamiḻ (Ampulipparuvam 10); by Campanta Caraṇālaya Muṉivar in the Kantappurāṇaccurukkam; and by Paṭikkācu Pulavar in Toṇṭaimaṇṭalaccatakam 9. This fact has led scholars to date Kacciyappar to the 17th Cent. itself; they considered the 17th Cent. poets as *the* safe upper limit. Thus K.A. Nil. Sastri (1625 A.D., in HSI.3rd ed., 1966, p.387): H. and C. Jesudasan in HTL, p.211; T.P. Meenakshisundaram in AHTL p.119.

6.3. It was Mu. Aruṇācalam (Tamiḻ ilakkiya varalāṟu-14th Cent., p.80) who first argued for an *earlier date* based on two very suggestive allusions to Murugan's interpretation in the question of the correctness of the *sandhi* in Kacciyappa's poem, found in two genuine Tiruppukaḻ stanzas of Aruṇagirinādar-Nos. 525 and 793. Since Aruṇagiri may be dated in ca.1400 A.D., Kacciyappa should be prior to this date. Mu. Aruṇācalam sees the time of Kacciyappa as falling between Vīracōḻiyam A.D.1070, and Aruṇagiri, A.D.1400.

J. Filliozat, in the introduction to La légende de Skanda, 1967, suggests a rather early date: "Il appartient lui-même, semble-t-il, au XIIe siècle." Mu. Varadarajan in his history of Tamil literature written in Tamil (1972) leaves the *purāṇa* undated.

6.4. Let us now briefly examine the internal evidence. Apart from the almost selfevident fact that Kacciyappa has imitated Kamban, there is the massive influence of Śaiva Siddhānta thinking, doctrine and terminology pervading the entire poem, not just a few selected portions. Kacciyappa

uses well-digested Śaiva Siddhāntic terms derived straight from Meykaṇṭa Tēvar's *sūtras*. Quite organically, the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy is woven into the texture of the *purāṇa*. There are not only individual terms, motifs or ideas adopted from Meykaṇṭaṉ and his commentators, but entire large portions, so to say entire mythico-theological-philosophical situations which prove that not only did the poet know earlier *purāṇas* and *āgamas* but was well-versed in the treatises of Meykaṇṭaṉ and Aruṇanti. Since Aruṇanti's time is ca. the latter part of the 13th Cent., Kacciyappa must be *later than the 13th Cent.* A.D., but not later - as we saw - than ca. 1450. Kacciyappa had two close students who carried on his work: Koṉēriyappa and Ñāṉavarōtayar. Koṉēriyappa did not mention Kacciyappa, but Ñāṉavarōtayar did, praising him in the 13th invocatory stanza of the Upatēcakāṇṭam. The reference (*kañci vaḷar kacciyappa*) *may* suggest that Kacciyappa was still alive at the time of the writing. Ñāṉavarōtayar has been dated in ca. 1425.

Summing up the problem of the date we must unfortunately admit that any real precision is impossible but that we will probably be not widely off the mark if we suggest the time of the Tamil Kantapurāṇam as between 1350-1450 A.D., rather round 1400 A.D.

7. Sanskrit and Tamil Versions

7.1. The most interesting problem is, of course, the question of the relationship between the Tamil and the Sanskrit versions of the Skandapurāṇa. The Tamil Kantapurāṇam claims to belong to the Skandapurāṇa. The Sanskrit text on which it was presumably based is known from manuscripts (e.g. India Office Library, London, San. IO 1431 and San. IO 238) and from one recent printed edition. This Sanskrit text has never been studied critically, and the possibility was raised by Filliozat (1967) and by me (1975) that the *Tamil* Kantapurāṇam was *earlier* than this Sanskrit text. Let us now for the rest of this talk discuss this fascinating problem.

7.1. Our poet, in the so-called Apology part of his Introduction, says that he had studied a Sanskrit *purāṇa* on Skanda and used it as his model (st. 33). It is one of the 18 ancient stories given by Nandi who had received them from Lord Śiva himself; it was told by Sanatkumāra, compiled and classified by Vyāsa, and listened to and recited by Sūta (st. 38). In st. 43, our poet admits that he *cannot* tell the *whole* story of Skanda since it is an infinite story (45); and that there are *various versions* of it (*pētam* < *bheda*—). "Having laid open and investigated these diversities", writes Kacciyappa, "I shall tell what I consider as the true version of the revealed Kāṇṭam." In previous times, Sūta had told the story in Sanskrit; now, Kacciyappa is going to tell it in Tamil, in a number of stanzas in the *viruttam* metre (46, 48), because he had been asked by wise, cultured men in Kāñci to do so (49).

7.2. As far as we can say, there are two Sanskrit versions of the *purāṇa*, a Northern and a Southern version. The problems connected with the Northern version are so complicated that I cannot even mention them. They concern an entire corpus of literature, part of which was published, once in Bombay, once in Delhi. However, these texts are of *no immediate interest* whatsoever to us, since they have almost nothing in common with the Tamil Kantapurāṇam. Whether Kacciyappa knew the Northern traditions about Skanda contained in these texts or not, he certainly did *not* take them as his main model and source of inspiration and information. He was obviously nurtured by two traditions: one, the purely indigenous-autochthonous Tamil tradition, which provided him with the myths of Cūr, of Vaḷḷi, with the motif of *kaḷavu*, of *veṟi*, of *maṭal*, etc.; another, a Southern Sanskritic tradition different from the Northern Sanskritic traditions about Skanda. And *this* Southern Sanskritic tradition has also been fixed, as we shall see, textually—in a little-known but fascinating Sanskrit *purāṇa*. But first, let us return to Kacciyappa's Preface. He explicitely states that he is not going to tell the whole story of Skanda, and that he had investigated different

versions, and chosen *one*. We should also realize that Kacciyappa has several times stressed the 'Tamilness' of his work; his work is firmly rooted in the South—in Kāñci, in Toṇṭaināṭu—and as the first parts and the last portions show beyond any doubt, in the local, indigenous Tamil tradition of the Murugan myth. Whoever would wish to doubt what I have just stated should simply open the KP and read stanzas 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 of the *pāyiram*. Only South Indian shrines are mentioned in these praises of Murugan; not one single word of any Northern temple or even a place in North India; only Vaḷḷi is mentioned as 'Our Lady' (*iṟaivi*), Devasenā being completely ignored; etc. and so forth.

7.3. However, Kacciyappa obviously had a Sanskrit model on which he based the main stories of his *purāṇa*, which embodied what could be designated as the Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam traditions of the Skanda-Murugan myth. He consciously 'Tamilized' his work, not only in language, prosody, images, metaphors, but also in content, motifs and ideology; and more: in adding Southern myths to the main Purāṇic story of Skanda. The problem as it faces us is: What were his sources and models? Were these models some written, literary texts composed in Sanskrit? Or simply an oral, *purāṇic*-epic traditions current among the people and the clergy of Toṇṭaināṭu? And what were his indigenous-autochthonous sources and models?

7.4. Some of these indigenous and local sources and models are obvious. Our poet must have known and utilized such texts as the Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai and Paripāṭal. He must also have been well-versed with the traditions of the bardic *akam* love-poetry of ancient Tamils. But apart from that, he must also have nad access to the rich oral, folk traditions concerning the expanded versions of at least two important myths—the one about the killing of the demon Cūraṉ, the other about the *kaḷavu* marriage with the indigenous girl Vaḷḷi. Even apart from these, there are motifs in

the Kacciyappa version of the Kantapurāṇam which are obviously specific for Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam of the 14th Cent. A.D.

7.5. With regard to the Sanskrit or Sanskritic model of Kacciyappa, I already mentioned the fact that it was the *Southern* Sanskritic tradition of the myths about Skanda that must have been Kacciyappa's source. This, mainly because the differences between Kacciyappa's version and the *Northern* texts are so fundamental and so far-reaching. For instance: according to the Northern tradition, the main weapon of Kumāra in his war against his chief enemy, Tāraka, was fashioned from the rays of the Sun by Viśvakarmā; in the Southern version, the main weapon of Murugan in his war against Cūraṉ was the gift of Pārvatī. The Northern version does not know anything of Vaḷḷi or Cūr. In the Southern tradition, Cūr and Vaḷḷi play the most crucial part.

There is a text, in Sanskrit, which closely corresponds to the Tamil version of Kacciyappa. This text is called Śrīskāndamahāpurāṇam or Śivarahasyakhaṇḍa, and it appears to be a composite text. It has been printed by Ceṅkalipuram Aṉantarāma Tīkṣitar in Cēlam—the date is not given, but the Preface is dated 9.3.1963. In the Introduction, the work is said to be *the* Śivarahasyakhaṇḍa of Śaṃkarasaṃhitā of Vyāsa's Skandapurāṇa (a claim which I do doubt), and to have 13.000 *ślokas*. The editor is maddeningly vague about *where* he got hold of the text and how. We do not know anything about its date or authorship. We can only gather from his words that, "about 70 years ago", a pious person by name of Aṉanta Vaittiya Naṭacivaṉ, published the text in grantha, and that our editor republished it in devanāgarī. From a prefatory poem to the original edition in grantha we gather that it was probably published at Maṉṉārkuṭi in 1893. And this is as far as we can go, at least at this moment.

As I said before, *this* Sanskrit text has never been studied critically. It appears to be composed of three parts: Kāṇḍas 1-5 which set out fairly coherently the myths of the South Indian Sanskritized Skanda-Murugan; the Dakṣakāṇḍa,

attached to the latter by means of an interpolation; and the Upadeśakāṇḍa.

Now, the question is: Is the Sanskrit version published recently in Salem the underlying model of Kacciyappa's Tamil text? Or—which I consider more probable—is *this* Southern Sanskrit version itself based on Kacciyappa's Tamil poem which is based rather on oral transmission and a Southern Sanskritic plus indigenous Tamil tradition? Only one thing is certain: these two Southern versions of the Skanda-Murugan myths are the *two funtamental texts* of the ***Southern tradition*** and they *differ* drastically from the Northern versions published in Bombay and Delhi.

I have performed a detailed comparative analysis of the Vaḷḷi—Murugan episode (if we can call it an episode) as treated in both texts. The results were published on the pages of the Indo-Iranian Journal (21,1979). Some striking facts emerged from this comparison.

First, the myth of Murugan's love for and marriage to Vaḷḷi, his local South Indian bride, is found in the 3rd chapter of the 5th *kāṇḍa* of the Skt. text in the midst of a *paurāṇika* narration; in Kacciyappa's work, it provides a powerful, beautiful, climactic ending to the Kantapurāṇam as a whole—an example of the skilled poet's sense of fitness, of order, and of the 'Tamilness' of the myth. The Sanskrit version treats this myth rather as an 'en passant' episode.

Second, the Tamil version of Kacciyappa is much more elaborate, contains more data, stories and details than its Skt. counterpart, and is artistically incomparably superior to its Sanskrit counterpart. More specifically, the typically Tamil, indigenous conventions, customs and concepts are omitted from the Sanskrit version. Thus e.g. where the Tamil text deals at length with the *veṟiyāṭal* of a Muruga priest (*vēlaṉ*) who comes in order to cure Vaḷḷi of her love-sickness, the Sanskrit text is completely silent. It ignores the whole episode of the *vēlaṉ* and says simply that the mother of Lavalī and other villagers invoked their *kuladaivatā* Guha. Another

example: In the Tamil text, Murugan is prepared to resort to the ancient custom of mounting a palmyra-stem toy-horse (*maṭal*) and ride it through the village streets if Vaḷḷi is not brought to him. The Sanskrit tradition has of course nothing analogical, and so it leaves out this important indigenous social psychological custom and the Skanda of the Skt. text says that he would paint the portrait of Lavalī on a woven cloth and stare at it—a somewhat ridiculous suggestion. While it could be argued that the Tamil text is more complex, sophisticated and refined product based on an earlier, more primitive, simpler Skt. model, it can equally well be argued that the Sanskrit text is a sort of abbreviated version of the underlying indigenous Tamil original. And this is certainly the impression one gathers when reading carefully the two texts and when taking into account, too, matters of prosody, poetics, language and style.

The Tamil KP is much more delicate and artistic when describing love-scenes between Vaḷḷi and Murugan than the Sanskrit version which indulges in gross eroticism imitating the Kāmaśāstra conventions. Whereas the *kaḷavu puṇarcci* of Vaḷḷi with Murugan in lines 115 ff. of the Tamil text has something almost mystical about it, and can very well be interpreted in terms of the search of the soul (Vaḷḷi) for the Divine, the Sanskrit text describes how the god seizes the girl by the hair, bites her lips with his teeth (*daṣṭvā dantacchadaṃ vadaiḥ*), and simply enjoys her sexually (*saṃbhoga*).

Such and similar instances could be multiplied. They show, I believe, that just as the Lavalī Nāyikā is a Sanskritization of the Tamil Vaḷḷi, the whole Sanskrit text of *this* Śivarahasyakhaṇḍa is a later imitation, far inferior and much abridged, of the Tamil poem of Kacciyappa.

To sum up:

The Tamil Kantapurāṇam was composed around 1400 A.D. by a single author, a Śivācārya of the Kumarakōṭṭam shrine at Kāñcipuram by name of Kacciyappa, who combined in his great work various streams and sources: the Southern

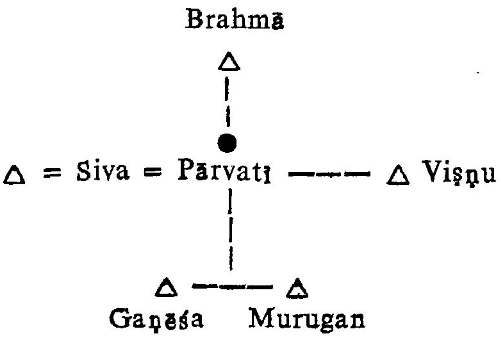
Sanskritic traditions of the myths of Skanda current among the members of his Gurukkaḷ community, the autochthonous-indigenous Tamil traditions about Murugan current among the people of Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam, and the ancient, classical old Tamil cultural traditions.[1] The Sanskrit Śrīskāndamahāpurāṇam published recently in Selam seems to be an abbreviated later version of Kacciyappa's Tamil text. Although the two texts manifest important divergencies and differences, they represent in their basic structure, in their perspective, plots, main themes and motifs, a rather independent, Southern tradition of the Skanda-Murugan myth, current round Kāñcipuram at the time when the Murugan cult was being revived and reshaped to develop into an almost "national" Tamil lore. The Murugan myths themselves were of course much older than either version. The great popularity of the Tamil Kantapurāṇam was probably responsible for the relative lack of variation in the Murugan myths recorded in Tamil literature as a whole. In fact, as D. Shulman correctly recognized, the high degree of standardization distinguishes the Murugan corpus from all other areas of Tamil mythology: this is probably one of the reasons why the Murugan myth has become, so to say, the national myth of Tamilnadu.

1. In addition, there is of course another stream—or, rather, two streams of ideology present vigorously in Kacciyappa's work: the Śaiva Āgamas which he must have known and used in his daily services in the Kumarakoṭṭam temple, and the philosophical notions and interpretations of the Śaiva Siddhānta which ultimately regards Skanda-Kumāra-Guha-Subrahmaṇya-Murugan as identical with Śiva, the highest reality.

ŚHAKTIC FEATURES OF ARUṆAGIRI'S BHAKTI

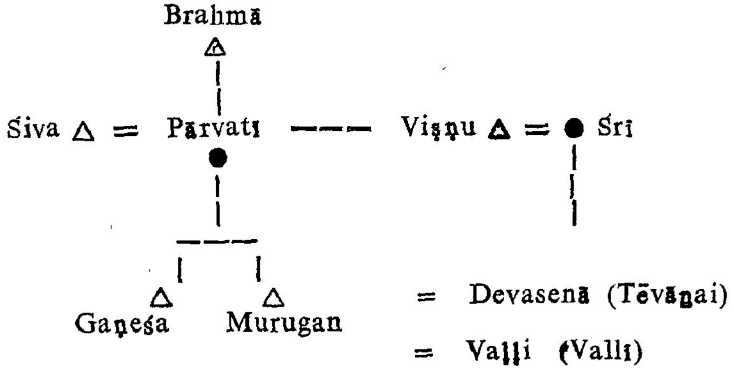
O.1. In a recent study (1974), based on the ideas of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Pierre Maranda, Brenda E.F. Beck has argued that a "kin nucleus" lies at the heart of South Indian kinship. At the center of this nucleus—and here we come to a point directly relevant to our own argument—is a *female* who is surrounded by males. Whatmore, this position of the female at the center of things is not derived from other characteristics of the structure but is conscious and direct.

O.2. When we apply this idea of the "kin nucleus" with the female in the center to the Saiva family of gods as viewed by a contemporary South Indian Hindu we get the following picture which is of particular interest to us as to the position of Murugan:



Δ = male; O = female; | = descent link (i.e. parent-child relationship); — = sibling link (i.e. brother-sister relationship); = marriage relationship, marital link. Observe the regular structure with the female in the center.

O.3. Murugan—in his contemporary shape—has two consorts: Vaḷḷi and Devasenā-Teyvayāṉai. Very appropriately, these two were 'originally' daughters of Viṣṇu, and sisters, so that Murugan married, precisely according to the kinship pattern current in the Dravidian south, the daughters of his maternal uncle. Śiva's extended family now looks as follows:



O.4. This picture is valid today, as it was obviously valid when one of the greatest Tamil poets, and one of the foremost revivalists of the Muruga cult, Aruṇagirinādar (ca. 1370-1450 A.D.), composed his colourful poetry. In this speech I would like to argue that Aruṇagiri was, in fact, the devotee of the Devī, or, if we want, of the *ammā*, the Mother-Goddess, the Śakti, a shākta, and that he worshipped the Goddess explicitely in the person of Vaḷḷi.

O.5. Murugan's story developed—under the strong influence of Sanskritic, epic and purāṇic motifs—from an original tribal myth of a proto-hunter, of an ever youthful god of hunters, Cēy Murugu, who was mating with Vaḷḷi, the female energy-potential, the female source of power, the *ammā-devī* of the primitive neolithic cultivators. The divine sexual union of Cēy and Vaḷḷi accomplished the primordial creative act—on one level: that of the mythus; and, later, in the ritual and speculative spheres. However, even in such relatively late text as the Tamil Kantapurāṇam, the ecotype where Vaḷḷi lived is clearly that of the swidden cultivators,

as we have seen in the previous talks. The union of Murugan and Vaḷḷi symbolizes, too, on the (so to say) ecological level of the myth, the integration of the two types of tribal socio-economic organization—of hunters and slash-and-burn cultivators.

An echo (probably the earliest textual evidence) of this divine mating may be still heard in one ancient Tamil poem, Naṟṟiṇai 82:4, which says *muruku puṇarntu iyaṉṟa vaḷḷi pōla* "like Vaḷḷi who has gladly agreed to join Murugu (in sexual union)". We get a glimpse of this 'original' Murugan the son (*cēy*) of goddess Koṟṟavai, from a short but powerful Old Tamil stanza with says:

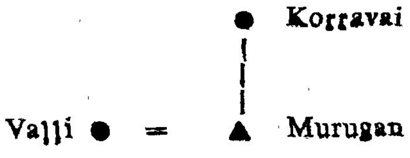
செங்களம் படக்கொன் றவுணர்த் தேய்த்த
செங்கோ லம்பிற் செங்கோட் டியானைக்
கழறொடிச் சேஎய் குன்றங்
குருதிப் பூவின் குலைக்காந் தட்டே

The Red One kills,
crushing the demons
and making the battlefield red
as his anklets whirl,
his arrows red-shafted,
his elephants red-tusked,
his hill
thick with bloody bunches
of *kāṇtaḷ*

At that early period, the female center of the future 'kin nucleus' was very probably occupied by the goddess Koṟṟavai herself (later identified with Durgā-Pārvatī), one of the mother-goddesses associated with fertility and disaster, victory and disease, whose cult may represent the most ancient, most tenacious, most persistent of all Indian, pre-Aryan cults. Another female goddess, the future *śakti* of Murugan, belonging to a different ecotype and a different socioeconomic setting than Koṟṟavai, was Vaḷḷi.

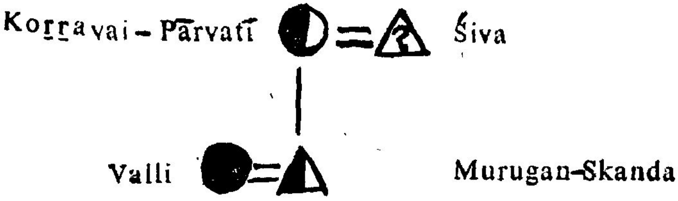
However, *how* and *why* the ancient tribal Dravidian Red God, the son of Koṟṟavai, transformed into the many-faced Skanda-Subrahmaṇya-Kumāra-Kārtikeya-Murugan-that is a totally different story, irrelevant for the topic of this talk.

1. In this talk, I want first to ask *when began* the worship of Vaḷḷi as an *object of bhakti*. Though I am convinced that the worship of Vaḷḷi as such is deeply prehistoric and that she was one of the ancient *ammā's*, a goddess connected with shifting cultivation in the forest, and probably with fertility, we have no direct textual proof of that, and it remains a hypothesis. However, whatever she may represent, she fits well into the pattern of the double marriage of a god in Tamil India. Before the texts of Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai, of Paripāṭal and, in particular, of Cilappatikāram, there is no *textual* evidence, but the pattern is there: the youthful god of the Indian South is married to *two* wives—after the process of Brahminization-Sanskritization has been accomplished—the FIRST wife being 'historically' LATER but first in prestige since she comes from a high caste, is 'Sanskritic' or even part of the Brahminic pantheon and of the 'great' tradition, whereas the SECOND wife is 'historically' EARLIER, but hierarchically lower because she comes from a low or lower caste, often from a tribe (parallels with Mahārāṣṭra). *How* this development may have come about may be indicated by the following three diagrams in which dark symbols represent *roughly* Dravidian 'matter', fair symbols represent matter 'imported' through the agency of the Brahmins and the process of Sanskritization.



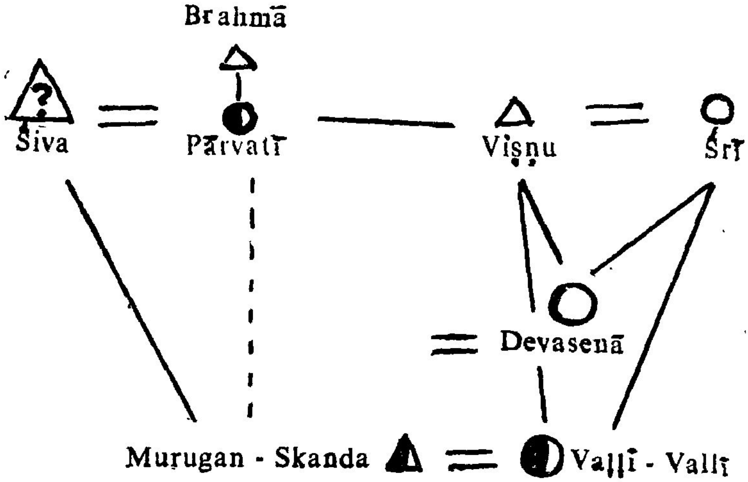
1. The 'original' Dravidian set-up.

(Please note on the following diagrams that the symbol of Śiva carries a ? question-mark. We do regard 'Śiva' as a deity which is of unknown origin, possibly equally pre-Dravidian as pre-Aryan.)



2. Later situation:

Beginnings of Sanskritization - Brahminizatio



It is important to notice that the earliest full-fledged bhakti text in Tamil, Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai (ca. 250-300 A.D. or later), though composed by a highly 'Sanskritized' poet Nakkīrar, the member of the clergy, introduces Vaḷḷi (*not yet* as an object of direct devotion), as part of a standard iconographic image of Kumāra-Kartikeya-Murugan: one of the god's six faces—the sixth—smiles in serenity at Vaḷḷi with creeper-like waist, the innocent daughter of the mountain—tribals (*kuṟavar maṭamakaḷ...vaḷḷiyoṭu nakai-y-amarntanṟē*).

This is an important moment in the process of drawing Vaḷḷi into the orbit of the worship of Skanda-Murugan, since the 'process' of smiling at Vaḷḷi is not just an expression of affection or some fleeting glimpse of emotion on the part of the divine consort but one of his *activities*, one of the functions (*kriyā*) *performed* by one of his six faces. Observe, too, that it is not Devasenā-Teyvayāṉai who is the object of this activity but Vaḷḷi!

Centuries later, the same divine "job" of paying special attention to Vaḷḷi is described by Aruṇagiri in a paraphrase of these ancient lines by Nakkīrar in one of his Tiruppukal songs:

ஏறுமயி லேறி விளையாடுமுக மொன்றே
ஈசருடன் ஞானமொழி பேசுமுக மொன்றே
கூறுமடி யார்கள்வினை திர்க்குமுக மொன்றே
குன்றுருவ வேல்வாங்கி நின்றமுக மொன்றே
மாறுபடு சூரரை வதைத்தமுக மொன்றே
வள்ளியை மணம்புணர வந்தமுக மொன்றே
ஆறுமுக மானபொருள் நீயருளல் வேண்டும்
ஆதியரு ணாசல மமர்ந்த பெருமானே.

Free translation:

One face is occupied with the divine sport of riding the peacock;
one face does speak words of wisdom with Siva;
one face destroys the karma of the devotees who pray;
one face does despatch the spear to pierce the mountain;
one face did destroy the Cūrar who took diverse forms;
one face did happily accept Vaḷḷi in marriage and love.
Reveal the secret meaning of assuming six faces,
O Lord enshrined in ancient Aruṇāchala!

But it is above all in Cilappatikāram (ca. 450 A.D), Canto 24, that we have *the first prayers addressed directly to Vaḷḷi*, accompanied by the very important motif of the identification of the goddess, the consort of Murugan, with the mountain-tribe of the Kuṟavar, and with the ancestral region of the clan (*kulam*). Even more significant, from our point of view,

is the fact that in the prayer it is Vaḷḷi who is worshipped *first*; then the god himself, then both of them. *Why* is it the Cilappatikāram in which we encounter for the first time in the Tamil *textual* tradition direct worship of Vaḷḷi as the Goddess? Because indeed Cilappatikāram is the epic or drama of a *woman*—the drama of how a woman becomes a *devī*: Kaṇṇaki is its human—and divine—heroine; the female power, the dangerous force of the female is its real topic, on the human and the divine levels (Mādavi 'destroying' Kōvalaṉ 'on the human level'—though, of course, Kōvalaṉ deserves his impoverishment by exploiting Mādavi socially and economically, and Mādavi, by finally renouncing the social order while moving on to the plane of redemption; but above all Kaṇṇaki, first saving Kōvalaṉ on the purely human level from poverty and despair, then destroying the unjust king of Madurai and the city itself, and finally, deified, saving Kōvalaṉ for the second time on the divine or redemptive level). That is why, in Canto 24, Vaḷḷi the *female* deity, the goddess, the *ammā*, the *devī*, is directly worshipped, too.

2. The worship of Vaḷḷi culminated in Aruṇagirinādar, who, I do maintain, was in fact a shākta. There are many stanzas scattered throughout his vast work which speak of *devī* and her worship in general. According to Aruṇagiri, *devī* has incarnated at innumerable times for the benefit of mankind; her complexion is green, she is the presonified Vedas, she has removed his ignorance, desire and suffering, destroyed his ego, and showered her grace on him; she is his mother and protector.

However, two types of poems are of specific interest to us: In one, Aruṇagiri worships *śakti* specifically as Vaḷḷi, the beloved consort of Murugan; in another, he extolls Vaḷḷi as *greater than Murugan himself*. I have examined seventeen such stanzas from two of his collections: his famous Tiruppukaḻ, and the slender but extremely important Kantaranupūti, "Skanda Experience".

Thus in the last stanza of the poem Tiruppukaḻ (further TP) 536 Aruṇagiri tells us how he had been blessed by

Vaḷḷināyakī with her divine touch, and this *sparśadīkṣā* removed the filth and sickness of his karma (*viṉaiṉōymalam*). In TP 796, the worship of Vaḷḷi is connected with the *upadeśa* of the supre me mystical syllable *oṃ*. TP 1112 describes how the Lord Muruga was smitten by love for the *kuṟatti* (=Vaḷḷi who belongs to the Kuṟa tribe) with saffron-coloured breasts. Similarly TP 397, 1237 etc. describe the affection for and even the worship of Vaḷḷi by Subrahmaṇya. TP 15 says, "O Lord you who worship with hands joined in veneration (*kaiku vittuk kumpiṭum*) the golden branch of the Kuṟa tribe". And again TP 1260: "O Kumareśa, fatigued by wandering through countless jungles and hills, you have in humbleness worshipped the feet of the little girl keeping watch for the hunters of their millet." But among all TP poems, probably the one most explicitely to show that Vaḷḷi is the object of Lord Murugan's worship is No. 1195 which says: "O Lord, you who have grasped the pair of clear, divine feet (of Vaḷḷi) saying: My proper worship and devotion is (the worship) of a little hunters' girl (*vēṭuvar ciṟumiyō ruttikkuḷ/yāṉvaḻi aṭimaiyeṉac ceppi*)". *Vaḻiyaṭimai* is a term which cannot be translated in a simple straightforward manner but only paraphrased as "proper (implying also 'hereditary, traditional and established') worship and devotion".

Even more telling and important—for our argumentation-is the study of the eleven stanzas of Kantaraṉupūti (henceforth, KA) which mention Vaḷḷi: there is namely a kind of progression and gradation in these references.

KA 6 mentions Vaḷḷi for the first time leaving us in no doubt whatsoever about the god's own devotion and worship of his *śakti*: *paṇiyā eṉa vaḷḷi patam paṇiyum/ taṇiyā atimōka tayāparaṉē*[1] "O Embodiment of Compassion! O Lord of unquenching love for Vaḷḷi, at whose feet you bow, asking for service!"

The charming KA 12 says:

செம்மான் மகளைத் திருடும் திருடன்
பெம்மான் முருகன் பிறவான் இறவான்
சும்மா இருசொல் லறஎன் றலுமே
அம்மா பொருளொன் றுமறிந் திலனே.

The Thief, stealing the red doe's daughter,
the great Murugan, birthless and immortal,
once said: Be still and do not speak!
And, oh, I don't know a thing of what he meant!

The act of *'cemmān makaḷai tiruṭum'*, i.e· "the stealing of the red-doe's daughter" refers of course to the midnight adventure of Murugan the Hunter as he came to the village of the mountainfolk and eloped with his sweetheart Vaḷḷi. However, the connection with the *mauna upadeśa*, the revelation through silence, is significant. It is clear that the stealing of Vaḷḷi at midnight has a spiritual significance, too. The Lord appears when all are asleep and everything is silent, and snatches away the soul which had prepared itself by complete inner silence.

In KA 22, Murugan is again said to bow to the feet of Vaḷḷi, while in KA 23 he embraces the lightning-creeper (=Vaḷḷi) of the tribe of the hunters. In 32, Murugan (great like a mountain), has embraced the elephant-female (*piṭi*) of the clan of the hunters, but more significant is KA 35: "Your vow (*vrata*), O Lord of Heaven, is to praise none else but Vaḷḷi with face radiant like the moon!" Vaḷḷi becomes a true *devi* here, she is Śakti, shining with a brilliant forehead, and god himself makes a *vrata*, a solemn vow to observe a holy practice-to praise in devotion and prayer (*tuti*) none else except Vaḷḷidevī. He is totally dedicated to her. And more than that: As a true shākta, he, the Supreme Lord whose lotus-like feet Brahma and other gods place on *their* heads—*he* places on *his* head the divine feet of the lightning-like Huntress Vaḷḷi! He is known as *kuṟamiṉ patacēkaraṉ*, the Lord whose head is adorned with the feet of Vaḷḷi. So says the

very significant KA 36—for, very importantly, in this stanza it is the Lord Muruga who is *oṃ* itself, who revealed the secret of *praṇava* to Śiva, and yet this supreme deity has given himself totally as a slave to *devi*, to Sakti, to Vaḷḷi. In KA 38, god is simply called the husband of the maiden of the hunter-tribe, in KA 39 he again embraces the shoulders of the lightning-like Huntress, and poem 40 tells us how, in search of Vaḷḷi, Murugan wandered amongst the mountain-springs, the waterfalls, the millet-fields and the watch-sheds.

Finally we reach KA 43, probably the most important of all these "shaktic" stanzas of Aruṇagiri. In it, the mystic poet sums up the entire process of *sādhanā*, as well as the reaching of its goal, and it is of course quite significant that the Lord is referred to in this stanza as the Beloved of Vaḷḷi who wears pure gems and clothes. As N. V. Karthikeyan has very correctly stressed, this description of Vaḷḷi is so unusual and different from the rest that it must have a special significance; and indeed it has. Vaḷḷi, the divine *śakti*, the *devi*, is conceived of here as quite indispensable for reaching the final goal of *sādhanā*. "O Lord Muruga, the Beloved of Vaḷḷi who wears pure gems and clothes", says KA 43, "by your love-grace (*anp'aruḷ*) the desire-chain was broken and the speechless—experience (*pēcā anupūti*) was born". The key word is of course *anparuḷ* 'the fusion of *anpu* 'affection, love, devotion, bhakti' and *aruḷ* 'divine grace.' *Anparuḷ* is the god's grace coupling with Vaḷḷi's love; true to the tradition of Kaumāra bhakti which is first textually expressed in Paripāṭal, Vaḷḷi symbolizes love, affection, desire, bhakti. Mere *aruḷ*, mere divine grace is, for Aruṇagiri, insufficient to lead to the supreme experience of god (*kantar-anupūti*). *Ninatu anp'aruḷāl* says KA 43.2: O Muruga who are the beloved (*nēca*) of Vaḷḷi, of your pure *śaktidevi*, by your grace and through the affection activated by your and our worship of Śakti, of Vaḷḷi, the chain of desires in the devotee has been broken, and the speechless and andescribable divine experience born,

Summing up: There are many references in Aruṇagirinādar's poetry in which he has extolled Vaḷḷi as *śakti*, as *devī*, as 'greater' than Murugan. Lord Murugan walks on the rocks and thorns of Vaḷḷimalai hills searching for the Golden Huntress. He brings sheaves of leaves for the young hunter-woman to fashion a dress for herself. He spends all his time in her company, thinking only of her. He becomes an errand boy for Vaḷḷi. He is her divine suitor, her lover, her body-guard. He declares himself to be ***her slave for all times***, and has it so inscribed on Mount Meru and witnessed by the devas. He massages her feet, treating them as the seed of *praṇava mantra*. In short, Aruṇagirinādar, so it seems to me, has himself worshipped Vaḷḷi as *śakti*, and has referred to the method of *śākta* worship by which the lover worships the beloved as Paraśakti. In Kantaraṉupūti, and, to a lesser extent, in Tiruppukaḻ, he shows that god is dependent on Devī or Paraśakti as the activating, live-giving principle, and that redemption and divine revelation is *not* possible without the active, decisive participation of *aṉpu*, i.e. śakti, symbolized – since he was a Kaumāra—by Vaḷḷi. God Murugan, for Aruṇagiri, was Vaḷḷi's 'slave' or 'actor' (typically shākta notions), participating in the play or *viḷaiyāṭu*, *līlā*, of which she as Paraśakti was the directrice.[2]

1. paṇiyā eṉavaḷ ḷipatam paṇiyum/taṇiyā
   atimō katayā paraṉē.

2. A slightly different Tamil version of this essay was published in *Cuṭarmalar*, New Delhi, 119-132.

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3. Brenda E.F. Beck, 'The Kin Nucleus in Tamil Folklore', in T.R: Trautmann (ed.), Kinship and History in South Asia, Ann Arbor, 1974.

4. K.V. Zvelebil, Tamil Literature, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1975, pp. 210-18; Tamil Literature, O. Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1974, pp. 108-11.

5. N.V. Karthikeyan, Kandar Anubhuti, The Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, 1972.

APPENDIX

Myth	*Earliest references*
1. Murugan'war against Cūr	Kuṟuntokai 1, 52, 105, 376 Naṟṟiṇai 7, 34, 268, 359, 367, 373 Akam 32, 59, 91, 98, 158, 162, 198, 297, 303, 304, 359 etc, These references belong to the first two centuries A.D., some of them may be even older.
2. Murugan's courtship of and marriage with Vaḷḷi	Naṟṟiṇai 82:4 (2nd-3rd Cent. A.D.) Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai (ca.265 A.D.) Cilappatikāram XXIV (ca.450 A.D.) Paripāṭal (350-400 A.D.)
3. The saga of Kaṇṇaki-Pattiṇi	Very probably in Naṟṟiṇai216 and possibly in Puṟam 278 Cilappatikāram(ca. 450 A.D.)

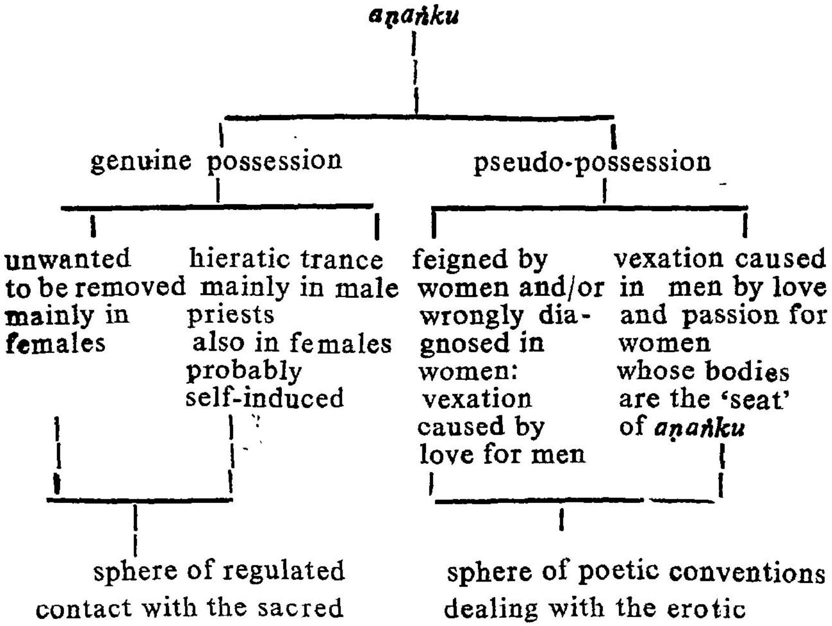
2

Reconstructed name of deity and gloss	Developed into or identified with	Textual and extratextual evidence	Correlation with ecotype, economic base or social organization
*Ūrammā 'Mother-Goddess of the ***ūr***'	Te. Ūrammā, Peddammā 'Great Mother', Kāḷiyamma etc., Ka. Māramma etc., Ta Māriyammā etc. the *ammā* deities of various specialized functions; Sakti's of male gods prob. connection with great local female deities (Kāmākṣī, Mīnākṣi etc.)	The widely spread cult of mother-goddesses all over Dravidian-speaking territories	Primitive neolithic agriculture; early settlements (*ūr*); fertility and harvest rites of early cultivators of the neolithic epoch; besides worshipping Mother-Goddess they may also have performed ancestor and snake worship.

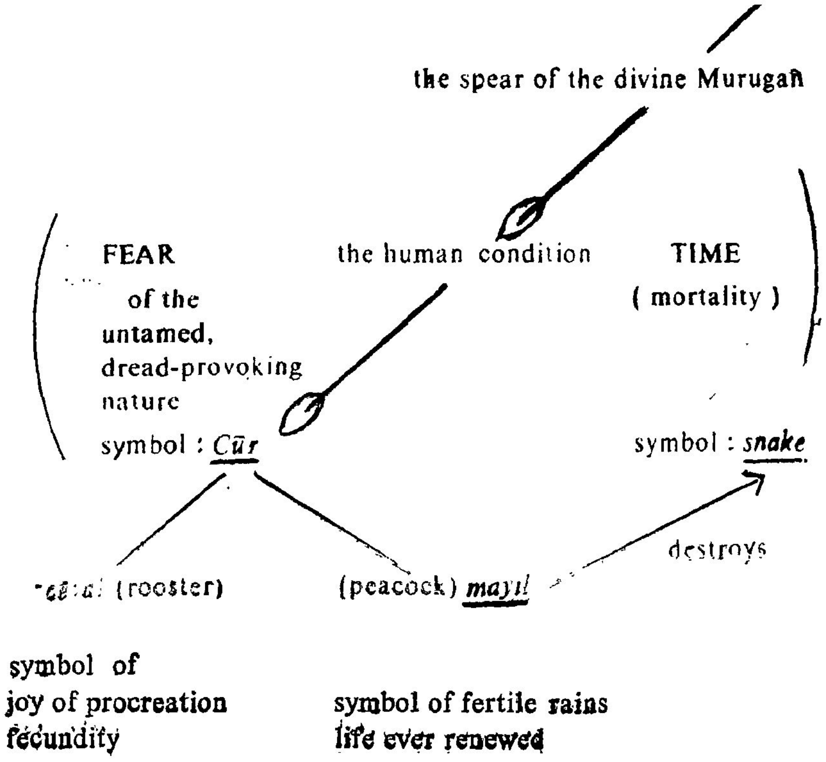
The four 'great gods' (the four guardian protective deities) of the four regions		*Tolk. Poṟul.* 5 Numerous references to the worship of the first two of the four gods in ancient Tamil texts, and several references to the worship of the last two of the four gods in the same sources. The sinhalese worship of the four great guardian deities of Ceylon.	Ecological types of the Tamil territory were systematized and conventionalized in the overall notion of the four (later five) *tiṇais* or physiographic regions of the "Tamil-speaking world".
* Cēy (y) ōn '**The Radiant** (Red) One', **probably the most Powerful male god** of ancient Dravidians	Murugu-Murugan, Cevvēḷ, Vēlaṉ Skanda-Subrahmaṇya The culture hero of the Tamils in recent and modern times after comparative obscurity in early middle ages	*Tolk. Poruḷ*. 5.2 Numerous references in old Tamil texts; cf. in particular Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai, Paripāṭal, Cilappatikāram Widely prevalent and intense worship in Dravidian-speaking nations of South India, particularly among Tamils of S. India and Ceylon. Worshipped also by Sinhalese as Kataragama deviyo.	The mountain-region, as the god of hunters. Hunting, food-gathering. Pre-neolithic foraging societies. Associated with Vaḷḷi, one of the ***ammās*** representing primitive neolithic agriculture of hill-tribes.

Reconstructed name of deity and gloss	Developed into or identified with	Textual and extra textual evidence	Correlation with ecotype, economic base or social organization
*Māyōn 'The Dark (Black or Dark-blue) One'	Māl, Tirumāl Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa	*Tolk. Porul.* 5.1 References in old Tamil texts, in particular Paripāṭal, Cilappatikāram and Kalittokai. Widely-spread worship in Dravidian-speaking nations of South India. Worshipped also by Sinhalese as Upulvan.	The wooded pasture-lands. God of seminomadic pastoralists. Cattle-breeding. Associated with domestication of animals. Associated with Nappiṉṉai-Nīlā (the prototype of Rādhā?).
*Kō → Vēntaṉ 'The king'	Indra > Intiraṉ	*Tolk. Porul.* 5.3 A few references in old Tamil texts, particularly Cilappatikāram and Kalittokai. No modern worship. Shift to god-king/ king-god represented by Siva and Viṣṇu.	Agricultural riverine lands, settled communities of advanced farmers. Irrigation-agriculture. Beginnings of urbanization. Transitional stage from demitribal to early feudal society. Associated with the idea of god-kingship.

*Kaṭalōn 'The Lord of the Ocean'	Varuṇa > Varuṇaṉ	*Tolk. Poruḷ.* 5.4 A few references in old Tamil texts to a 'sea god' (*kaṭal teyvam*) (e.g. *Ak.*240:8, *Cilapp.* etc.). Modern worship of sea-goddess (Kaḍalamma) in Kerala.	The littoral tracts, sea-shore. Fishermen. Fishing. Trade and over-seas contacts.


aṇaṅku
genuine possession
pseudo-possession
unwanted to be removed mainly in females
hieratic trance mainly in male priests also in females probably self-induced
feigned by women and/or wrongly diagnosed in women: vexation caused by love for men
vexation caused in men by love and passion for women whose bodies are the 'seat' of aṇaṅku
sphere of regulated contact with the sacred
sphere of poetic conventions dealing with the erotic

Cūrapatman's weapons	*Murugan's weapons*
earth	water of the seven seas
water	fiery flames
fire	hurricane wind
wind	serpents



Viṣṇu

via Indra	via the Southern hunters
Devasenā	Vaḷḷi
Heaven	Earth
Transcendence	Immanence
Active	Contemplative
Kriyāśakti	Icchāśakti
Kaṟpu	Kaḷavu
Imported	Indigenous
Brahminic-Sanskritic	Dravidian-Tamil

daughters of Viṣṇu + son of Śiva

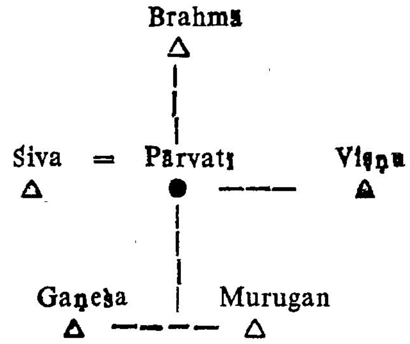
integration of Saiva and Vaiṣṇava

Skanda + Devasenā

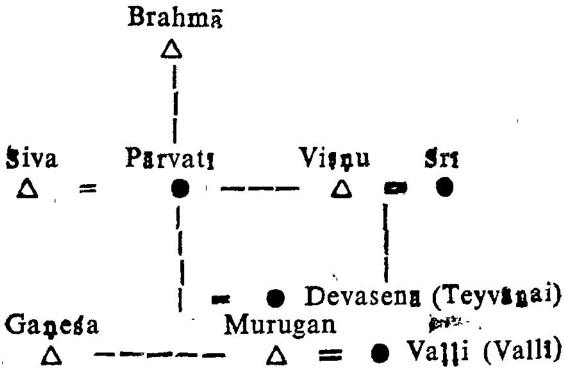
Murugan + Vaḷḷi

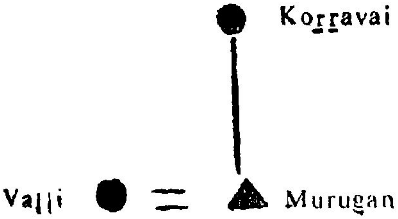
Merger:

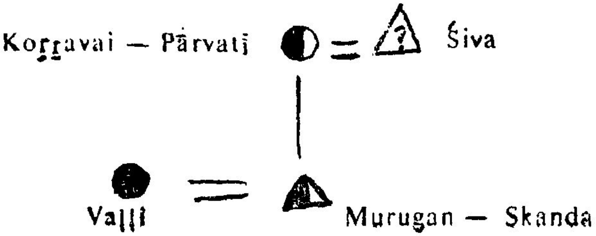
Vaḷḷi-Vallī + Skanda-Murugan + Devasenā—Teyvayāṉai

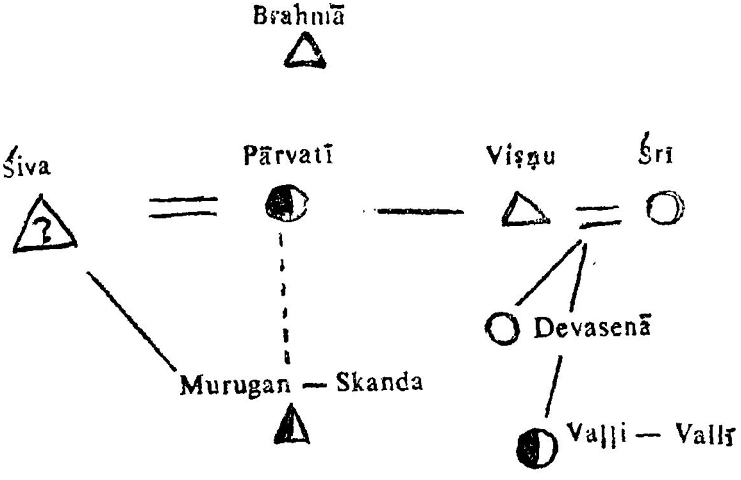


△ = male; = female; / = descent link (parent-child relationship); — = siblign link (brother-sister relationship); = marriage relationship, marital link;









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K.V. ZVELEBIL

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